THE PROPHET'S PROCLAMATION

An Exegetical Study of Āyah al-Tablīgh

S. Burair Abbas
M.H. Jaffer

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Table of Contents

Dedication and Acknowledgement i
About the Authors iii
Introduction by the Author v
Methodological Approach in the Book vii

Introduction to Āyah al-Tablīgh 13
Understanding *al-Mafhūm* and *al-Miṣdāq* 15
Establishing the *Mafhūm* of *Mā Unzila Ilayka min Rabbika* 16
Step 1: Analyzing the Verse 17
Step 2: Analyzing the Verses Immediately Surrounding the Verse in Question 24
Step 3: Analyzing the Entire Passage 26

The Queries on Āyah al-Tablīgh 41
1. Exactly where was the Verse of *Tablīgh* revealed? 41
2. What was the nature of the fear that the Prophet ﷺ possessed in delivering this Message? 45
3. What was the nature of the protection that Allah ﷻ promised the Prophet ﷺ? 47
4. What did the *Ahl al-Kitāb* who were mentioned before and after this verse possibly have to do with the Message that the Prophet ﷺ was going to deliver? 48
The Gist of the Understanding *(Mafhūm)* Derived from this Discussion 50

Establishing the True Representation *(Miṣdāq)* 53
Introductory Remarks 53
The Proposed Circumstances for Revelation *(Asbāb al-Nuzūl)* 54
The Personal Choice of Fakhr al-Rāzī 58
A Critical Analysis of Fakhr al-Rāzī's Selection 58
The Selected *Miṣdāq* for the Circumstance of Revelation 59

Discussion from the Narrations *(Riwāyāt)* 65
The Shī'ah Narrations *(Riwāyāt)* 66
The Sunni Narrations *(Riwāyāt)* 70

Examining the Alternative *Aḥādīth* on this Topic 79

Common Contentions on the Āyah Al-Tablīgh 83

Appendices 103
Appendix A 103
If Imām 'Alī's Appointment was So Important, then Why did the Prophet ﷺ Wait until Ghadīr to Give this Announcement? 103

Appendix B 109
The Verse of *Al-Ikmāl al-Dīn* - When was It Revealed? 109
Theory #1 111
Theories #2 and #3 111
Theory #4 112
Theory #5 (The Majority Sunnī Opinion) 113
Theory #6 (The Shī'ah and Minority Sunnī Opinion) 116

Appendix C 118
Resolving the Context of the Verse of *Al-Ikmāl al-Dīn* 118
Analysis 125

Conclusion 131

Other Publications 133

Please recite a Sūrah al-Fātiḥa for the following people:

Marhumeen of Nurmamod Hiridjee & Kassamali Daya families

Marhumeen of Husseinali & Ashrafbanu Bhimani families

Marhumeen of Hassanali & Fatemabai Hassam families

Marhumeen of Husseinali & Shirinbai Bhimji families

Dedication and Acknowledgement

We present this humble analysis on this crucial topic to our living Imām – Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ, whose *Wilāyah* is incumbent upon all Muslims – the Imām of our contemporary time, the preserver of the religion *(Sharī'ah),* and most importantly, the Divine guide who will fill this Earth with justice and equity and form a Godly kingdom.

We are indebted to our parents who brought us up on religious principles and taught us the importance of living a God-conscious life. We also want to acknowledge the unwavering support of our families and friends in finishing this work.

We pray to Allah ﷻ to make us successful in publishing more such projects; to fulfill our responsibilities towards Allah ﷻ and others in this life as long as we live; and gather us with other believers in Paradise near Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his pure progeny, the *Ahl al-Bayt* ﷺ.

May Allah ﷻ accept our endeavours and grant us more Divine providence *(tawfīq)* to serve His religion with utmost sincerity and practice it holistically. Finally, we would also like to express our gratitude to *Tasneem Institute* and Shaykh Azhar Nasser, who greatly assisted us in producing this work in the manner you find before you.

About the Authors

Sayyid Burair Abbas is an SAP consultant by profession and an independent researcher and translator in Islamic Studies with a particular focus in Shīʿah traditions. His areas of interest in Islamic Sciences are in both *ʿAqliyāt* - like Islamic philosophy and theology; and *Naqliyāt* - such as *Ḥadīth*, Intellectual History, and Jurisprudence. He has published many articles on various topics pertaining to Islamic disciplines for Iqraonline.

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Introduction by the Author

الحمد لله ربّ البريات

ثم نصلي على محمّد أفضل الصلوات

وعلى آله الكرام سفينة النجاة

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the creations.

And upon Muḥammad, be the best of salutations,

And upon his Noble Household, the Ship of Salvation.

One of the most historically contested verses of the Qurān among Muslims is the Verse of *Tablīgh* (Conveyance) - which is in Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 67 - a verse which commanded Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ to deliver a very crucial Message to his nation. Historically, this verse is said to be one of the last verses revealed to the final Messenger ﷺ. This verse explicitly signifies the importance of this said Message such that if the Prophet ﷺ does not proclaim it, it is as if he has not fulfilled his mission of Prophethood. Due to divergent views stemming from the narrations *(riwāyāt)*, Muslims have disagreed on the circumstances surrounding its revelation *(sabab al-nuzūl)*, its place of revelation, its meaning, and its interpretation. For Shī'ahs, the Verse of *Tablīgh* is evidence for the Divine appointment of a successor after Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ at Ghadīr Khumm. Meanwhile, Sunnīs oppose this view and assert that it has nothing to do with the Event of Ghadīr, proposing a myriad of other possible explanations.

It behooves a conscientious reader to properly consider the evidence for both perspectives. We contend that resolving the circumstance of revelation for this verse is quite important, because if it is substantiated that it was truly about the Event of Ghadīr, then the appointment of 'Alī ﷺ immediately assumes a theological significance. After weighing the Qurānic context carefully, specifically centralizing the discussion on the import of the phrase: *"what was revealed to you from your Lord"* (*mā unzila*

ilayka min Rabbika), the authors conclude that the best plausible and reasonable *miṣdāq* (representation) of this verse can only be the appointment of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ as the successor of the final Prophet ﷺ at Ghadīr Khumm.

At this juncture, one may question the value of producing a work such as this in the modern-day Muslim world in English, wherein the unification of Muslims under one banner is an increasingly pressing need. We believe that while unity with our Sunnī brethren is important, there should not be any compromise in clarifying our theological beliefs, which stand upon a robust Qurānic foundation and are amply capable of substantiation. Unfortunately, this need has become even more palpable given a growing neo-Salafist grassroots trend within the Shīʿah English-speaking community; this nascent group has sought to attack the very foundations of Shīʿism, espousing shoddy reasoning to claim that this verse is completely unrelated to the appointment of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ at Ghadīr Khumm. Considering this group's alarming efforts, it is imperative to clarify the truth to the perceptive audience, especially for the English-speaking one, and this cannot be overstated.

This book certainly had a predecessor in the excellent work produced by Ansarian Publications entitled *Verses of Ghadir* (published in 2014), however after reviewing this respectable work, we found the approach taken somewhat lacking in terms of methodological rigour. Perhaps this stems from the fact that the work is in fact an abridged translation of an originally Arabic work, written by Shaykh ʿAlī al-Kūrānī al-ʿĀmilī, especially since the scope of the original Arabic tome in fact surpasses a focused treatment of this verse. By composing our work in English from its very outset, we hope that our humble work may provide a more cogent presentation of the verse in question.

Methodological Approach in the Book

The methodology of this book follows the same rigorous approach we previously outlined in our humble work regarding the *Verse of Purification*, also generously published by *Tasneem Institute*. We have sought to apply the following framework in analyzing this verse, referencing various Arabic and Persian sources in the process within our footnotes:

1. Analysis of the verse's words and phrases *(Lughah al-Qurān)*.
2. Examining the conception *(al-mafhūm)* and application *(al-misdāq)* of the verse.
3. Investigating both preceding and succeeding verses and resolving the question of context *(al-siyāq)*.
4. Surveying the narrations *(riwāyāt)* dealing with the circumstance of revelation *(sabab al-nuzūl)*.

It should be recognized that our thesis in this work primarily rests on a Qurānic foundation, and the discussion of the narrations *(riwāyāt)* is only secondary. To render this work more accessible to the laity, we have therefore not endeavoured to discuss in detail the authentication of the narrations referenced. We have found a Qurānic-centered approach to be the most optimal in explaining the significance of this verse, especially because many narrations have not been impervious to the maladies of fabrication, distortion, and contradiction.

To illustrate the variation in narrations practically, we reflect on the narrations reported regarding verse 3 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah known as the Verse of *Al-Ikmāl al-Dīn* — another contentious verse pertaining to Ghadīr (we discuss this verse further in our Appendices). What follows is a summary of various "circumstances of revelation" *(asbāb al-nuzūl)* reported for this verse:

- It is reported via a mixed Baghdad-Kufan SS[1] that Ibn ʿAbbās asserted no one knows the day referred to in verse 3 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah.
- The Egyptian CL[2], Ibn Lahīʿah reported, from an Egyptian SS, that Ibn ʿAbbās asserted that in verse 3 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah and Sūrah al-Mā'idah in general were revealed on a Monday, like the birth of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, the commencement of his Prophethood, his departure from Makkah, his entrance into Madinah, the Battle of Badr, the lifting of the Black Stone, and the Prophet's death all occurred on Mondays.
- It is reported via a mixed Iraq-Hijaz-Egyptian SS that Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb asserted that verse 3 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah was revealed on a Monday, just as the Prophet's birth, the commencement of his Prophethood, his death, and the Day of Decision *(Yawm al-Furqān)*[3] all occurred on Mondays.
- According to the Kufan CL, Asbāṭ ibn Naṣr, Al-Suddī asserted that verse 3 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah was revealed on the Day of ʿArafah, after which no more verses regarding

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[1] SS - Single Strand, a narration with a single transmission [*munfarid*]. This concept was introduced by Joseph Schacht who was concerned with the dating of *aḥādīth*, thus began criticizing them based on *isnād*. *Isnād*, an Arabic word for "support/backing," is the chain of authorities specifying the human reporters from the time of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ or the *Ahl al-Bayt* ﷺ that verifies the authenticity of *aḥādīth* (reports of sayings or actions of the Prophet ﷺ or the *Ahl al-Bayt* ﷺ).

[2] CL - Common Link, introduced by Schacht in his book, *Origins*, and later developed further by Juynboll, is a transmitter who hears something from one authority and passes it on to several pupils.

[3] *Yawm al-Furqān* (the Day of Decision) refers to the Battle of Badr on the 17th of the month of Ramaḍān, in which the decision or the judgement of Allah ﷻ manifested itself clearly, and the distinction between truth and falsehood became clear between the Muslims and the Quraysh.

ḥalāl or *ḥarām* were revealed, and soon after that, the Prophet ﷺ passed away.

- Additionally, some narrations mention that Sūrah al-Mā'idah, coupled with verse 3 of this sūrah, were revealed completely at once to the Prophet ﷺ.
- According to the Eastern CL, Ibrāhīm ibn Ṭahmān, from a Basran source, from Umm ʿAmr bint ʿAbs, her uncle asserted that Sūrah al-Mā'idah was revealed when he and the Prophet ﷺ were on a journey *(fī masīr)*; this uncle and others (an unspecified "we") discerned the revelation by the way that the foot *(kaff)* or shoulder *(katif)* of *al-ʿAḍbā'*, the Prophet's female riding camel *(rāḥilatu-hu)*, was crushed under the weight *(min thiqal)* of the descending sūrah.
- It is reported via a mixed Baghdad-Egyptian SS that ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAmr asserted that Sūrah al-Mā'idah was revealed when the Prophet ﷺ was riding his female riding camel *(rākib ʿalā rāḥilati-hi)*, and she was unable to bear him (i.e., due to the weight), forcing him to dismount *(nazala)*.
- It is reported via an Eastern SS that Al-Rabīʿ ibn Anas asserted that Sūrah al-Mā'idah was revealed when the Prophet ﷺ was riding his female riding camel *(rākib rāḥilata-hi)* on the way *(fī masīr)* to the Farewell Pilgrimage *(Ḥijjat al-Widāʿ)*, causing the camel to buckle under the weight *(min thiqali-hā)*.
- Al-Quraẓī reports that Sūrah al-Mā'idah was revealed when the Prophet ﷺ was riding his she-camel *(ʿalā nāqati-hi)*, somewhere between Makkah and Madīnah, during the Farewell Pilgrimage *(Ḥijjat al-Widāʿ)*, cracking the she-camel's shoulder *(katif)* and forcing the Prophet ﷺ to dismount *(nazala)*.
- According to the Kufan CL, Layth ibn Abī Sulaym, Ṣahr ibn Ḥawṣab reported that his patron Asmā' bint Yazīd asserted that Sūrah al-Mā'idah was revealed all at once when the

Prophet ﷺ was riding *al-ʿAḍbāʾ*, his she-camel *(nāqah)*, while ʾAsmāʾ was leading it by the reins; the she-camel's upper leg *(ʿaḍud)* was almost crushed under its weight *(min thiqali-hā)*.

- According to another version reported from Layth, Ṣahr himself asserted that Sūrah al-Māʾidah was revealed when the Prophet ﷺ had stopped *(waqif)* at ʿArafah while mounted on his female riding camel *(ʿalā rāḥilati-hi)*, who was forced to kneel to prevent her foreleg *(dhirāʿ)* from being crushed (i.e., due to the weight).[4]

In conclusion, given the myriad views of the companions *(ṣaḥābah)* and their succeeding generation *(tābiʿūn)*, connecting the import of this verse with a circumstance that perfectly coincides with its context is quite difficult. Therefore, in lieu of the inherent maladies within the *Ḥadīth* corpus, establishing our premises based on Qurānic precepts and then buttressing them only post-hoc with the narrations is more prudent to eliminate unnecessary obfuscations around the significance of the verses in question.

Lastly, in Appendix C, we delve into a discussion concerning the parallelism between verses 67 and 3 of Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), an insight pioneered by these authors to demonstrate the thematic consistency between these two verses. We believe that this theory deserves further investigation, as it provides a foundation to understand why these verses digress between several seemingly unrelated topics.

We pray that Allah ﷻ accepts our humble efforts and forgives any slips of the pen that may have issued from our hands. We ask Him to grant us the intercession of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his

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[4] Adapted from the article by Orientalist Historian, Joshua Little, titled: *Explaining Contradictions in Exegetical Hadith*, which can be found at: "https://islamicorigins.com/explaining-contradictions-in-exegetical-hadith/."

Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ, and give us an elevated station with the righteous ones - for they indeed are a most worthy entourage![5]

S. Burair Abbas and M.H. Jaffer

[5] Sūrah al-Nisā' (4), verse 69.

1

Introduction to Āyah al-Tablīgh

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ ۖ وَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُۥ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

"O Messenger, convey what has been revealed to you from Your Lord; and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His Message. And Allāh will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allāh does not guide the disbelieving folk." (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 67)

Among the most highly contentious verses of the Qur'ān is Sūrah al-Mā'idah, verse 67, also known as ***Āyah al-Tablīgh*** **[Verse of Conveyance - *Tablīgh*]**, **or *Āyah al-Balāgh* [Verse of Clear Delivery of the Message (of the Qurān) - *Balāgh*]**. A great deal of the dispute surrounding this verse is the understanding of the phrase "*mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika*" - "what has been revealed to you from our Lord." The Shī'ah are unanimous that this Message which Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is being instructed to deliver in this verse is the proclamation of the *Wilāyah* of Imām 'Alī at Ghadīr Khumm. Meanwhile, the Ahl al-Sunnah are generally quite opposed to this view, although they have nonetheless alluded to this possibility in their *tafāsīr* works.[6] It should be said that this opposition is quite natural from the Sunnīs, as conceding that this verse has to do with Ghadīr would imply that the event was a Divine prescription with theological implications.

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[6] For example, al-Suyūṭī narrates that this verse was revealed for Ghadīr in his book, *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*. Another Sunnī scholar, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, narrates ten opinions about the reason for revelation of this verse, among which he includes the incident of Ghadīr.

The Sunnī line of reasoning in refuting that this verse has to do with Ghadīr is derived from two sources of evidence: Firstly, they quote some narrations that present an alternative *sabab al-nuzūl* (circumstance of revelation); and secondly, and more importantly, they argue that the context surrounding this verse is clearly about the *Ahl al-Kitāb* (People of the Book) - both before and after this verse; therefore, it should be interpreted in this context. Rather, they surmise that speculating it has anything to do with Ghadīr is a completely contrived interpretation.[7]

In this book, we will seek to analyze this verse in detail, both from the standpoint of the Qurānic context, and then from the standpoint of the *naqlī* (textual) sources.

We will divide our discussion into four parts:

1. Establishing a *mafhūm* (understanding) of the phrase *"mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika"* - "what has been revealed to you from your Lord" based on the Qurānic syntax and context.
2. Narrowing down to an appropriate *misdāq (representation)* for the phrase based on the *asbāb al-nuzūl* (circumstances of revelation) proposed by the Ahl al-Sunnah.
3. Strengthening the *misdāq (representation)* identified with the *riwāyāt* (narrations) on this topic.
4. Answering some of the common contentions raised by polemicists against the Shīʿah view.

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[7] Unfortunately, we have come to know that many of the Shīʿahs have been duped by this shoddy line of reasoning. We examine the probativity of Qurānic context *(hujjiyah al-siyāq)* in a great deal of detail under Contention #1 at: https://iqraonline.net/an-in-depth-analysis-of-the-verse-of-tathir-who-are-the-ahl-al-bayt-part-2/. In a gist, the context is not necessarily a *hujjah* (proof), unless both rational and narrational sources affirm that a verse is connected to its context. Nonetheless, there is always a wisdom underlying the placement of all the verses in the Qurān, which we will attempt to show in this book about the Verse of *Tablīgh*.

Finally, we will conclude with three Appendices whereby we will briefly touch on contentions about historical aspects of Ghadīr, as well as the Verse of Completion of the Religion *(Āyah al-Ikmāl al-Dīn)*. We would humbly request the readers to please be patient with us in this extended investigation, and to thoroughly read the thesis very carefully, as we do not believe that anything of its like has, to the present, been published in the English language.

Understanding *al-Mafhūm* and *al-Miṣdāq*

Before we begin, we need to clarify an important distinction that we will continue to employ in this discussion, namely the difference in Arabic logic between a *mafhūm* - a conceptual understanding, and a *miṣdāq* - a particular representation. The Qurānic dialect often alludes to a concept with its generalities in a manner whereby its framework is made clear. Then, it is up to the Noble Prophet ﷺ to deduce the real-world extension of that framework for the Muslims.[8] This applies equally in the contemporary world as well.

For instance, we may have the theoretical conception of a car as a "four-wheeled engine-powered form of transportation" *(al-mafhūm)*. The various representations of this conception *(al-maṣādīq)* would then be specific car makes such as: Toyota Corolla, Mercedes Benz A-Class, Rolls-Royce Ghost, etc.[9] Sometimes, multiple *mafāhīm* (plural of *mafhūm)* may have a single *miṣdāq* in the real-world; for instance, we have conceptions of Allah's Attributes (Mercy, Wrath, Justice, etc.), but there is only one

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[8] We find a beautiful exposition of this principle mentioned in the Qurān itself where it states: "...And We sent down to you the Remembrance so that you (O Prophet) may make clear to humankind what has been sent down to them; in order that they may reflect." (Sūrah al-Naḥl (16), verse 44)

[9] This is a very important distinction; for instance, lay people often mistake criticism of Muslims *(maṣādīq)* for critique on Islam *(mafhūm)*.

miṣdāq in the real-world for these *mafāhīm* and that is: Allah ﷻ. Sometimes, there is a one-to-one correspondence: a single *mafhūm* has a single *miṣdāq*. For instance, the conception of the 16th President of the United States has a single representation in Abraham Lincoln.[10]

In the below analysis, we will attempt to first outline the general framework wrought by the Qurānic context regarding the *mafhūm* (conceptual understanding) of "what was revealed to you from Your Lord" - *"mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika."* Subsequently, we will show from the *naqlī* (textual) sources via a process of elimination that the only proposed historical *miṣdāq* (particular representation) that would fit this criterion is *The Event of Ghadīr*.

Establishing the *Mafhūm* of *Mā Unzila Ilayka min Rabbika*

We seek to establish the *mafhūm* of this phrase from the Qurānic context itself. We will first start by analyzing the word choice and phraseology of this Verse of Conveyance *(Āyah al-Tablīgh)*; this will be followed by analyzing the verses immediately preceding and following the verse in question. We will then endeavour to examine the whole passage in context, from verses 49 to 68 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah.[11] Finally, we will make a few other observations

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[10] This is of course a very basic introduction to this dichotomy, but more advanced readers are encouraged to review this discussion in *Al-Manṭiq* by Shaykh al-Muẓaffar.

[11] The basis of the discussion here is derived from two sources:

1) Sayyid Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī al-Ṭehrānī's discussion about this verse in his book, *Ma'rifat al-Imām*, Vol. 7, Lesson 94.

2) A Persian paper entitled *Vākāvī-ye-Mafhūm-o-Miṣdāqī-ye-Āye-ye-Tablīgh Bar Asās-e-Dilālat-e-Siyāq* (An Analysis of the *Mafhūm* and *Miṣdaq* in the Verse of *Tablīgh* based on the Contextual Import), by Dr. Ābedin Momeni and Dr. Ḥamid Ziafar.

about the *mafhūm* drawn out from the intertextual analysis with other Qurānic verses.

Step 1: Analyzing the Verse

We will break down this verse 67 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah into segments as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا ٱلرَّسُولُ

("O Messenger!")

("Yā ayyuhā al-Rasūl")

The address *"Yā ayyuhā al-Rasūl"* has only occurred twice in the entire Qurān; in contrast, the address *"Yā ayyuhā al-Nabī"* has occurred a total of thirteen times. The address to the Noble Prophet ﷺ with the epithet of *al-Rasūl* is to emphasize that the Prophet ﷺ is a Messenger and must deliver that which he has been sent with; and it emphasizes his official capacity as an emissary of Allah ﷻ. In contrast, the word *al-Nabī* (the Prophet) emphasizes his being given Prophecy and knowledge through revelation.[12] The other verse in the Qurān which utilizes the address *"Yā ayyuhā al-Rasūl"* is verse 41 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), which is as follows:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلرَّسُولُ لَا يَحۡزُنكَ ٱلَّذِينَ يُسَٰرِعُونَ فِي ٱلۡكُفۡرِ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا بِأَفۡوَٰهِهِمۡ وَلَمۡ تُؤۡمِن قُلُوبُهُمۡ...

[12] A beautiful *tafsīr* point elucidated by the Qurānic commentator, Al-Sha'rāwī is that the Noble Prophet ﷺ is the sole individual in the Qurān who is referred to with these epithets *"al-Nabī"* and *"al-Rasūl."* Otherwise, all other Prophets of Allah ﷻ are referred to by their proper names: Ibrāhīm, Yūsuf, Mūsā, 'Īsā, etc. This emphasizes that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was the only "Prophet" and "Messenger" par excellence.

> "O Messenger! Do not be grieved by those who race towards disbelief among those who say: 'We believe' with their mouths, while their hearts have not believed..."

As we can see, this address of *"Yā ayyuhā al-Rasūl"* specifically appears in the Qurān to quell the Prophet's emotions in reference to the Message, and to affirm his role in delivering Allah's revelation. In this verse above, Allah ﷻ addresses the Prophet's grief, and He addresses the Prophet's fear. Meanwhile, the address *"Yā ayyuhā al-Nabī"* in the Qurān is more general and is often employed to address the Prophet ﷺ as it pertains to his day-to-day functions in the Muslim community.[13]

بَلِّغْ

("Convey-balligh")

("Balligh")

This word as a command implies delivery of a message to a group of people; it implies much more than the commonplace Qurānic commands enjoining towards a Prophetic statement (*al-qawl* or the command *qul*), a recitation (*al-qirā'ah* or the command *iqrā'*), or a remembrance (*al-dhikr* or the command *udhkur*). In the entire Qurān, the command to "convey-*baligh*" has only been issued once, namely in this verse.[14] Another verse where this word has

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[13] This point is beautifully discussed by Dr. Fāḍil al-Sāmarrā'ī in his *tafsīr* discussions, and the advanced reader is directed to this material for further details.

[14] Those who are knowledgeable in Arabic will realize that the command here is a Form II verb derived from the *maṣdar* تبليغ. Another verb employed often in the Qurān is the Form IV أبلغ derived from إبلاغ. The difference in the meaning between the two verbs is subtle, and some commentators, such as Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, have noted that the Form II verb is simply used for denoting increased emphasis in delivering the

been employed as a present-tense *(muḍāri')* verb is the following, whereby we derive that the role of Allah's Messengers is always conveyance of His Message without any fear or trepidation:

مَّا كَانَ عَلَى ٱلنَّبِيِّ مِنْ حَرَجٍ فِيمَا فَرَضَ ٱللَّهُ لَهُۥ ۖ سُنَّةَ ٱللَّهِ فِى ٱلَّذِينَ خَلَوْا۟ مِن قَبْلُ ۚ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ ٱللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَّقْدُورًا ﴿٣٨﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ يُبَلِّغُونَ رِسَٰلَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ وَيَخْشَوْنَهُۥ وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ أَحَدًا إِلَّا ٱللَّهَ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِٱللَّهِ حَسِيبًا ﴿٣٩﴾

"There is no blame on the Prophet in that which Allah has ordained for him. Such was Allah's way with those who passed before: and Allah's command has always been certain destiny. Such is the way of those who convey Allah's Messages and fear Him, not fearing any except Allah; and Allah suffices as a Reckoner." (Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33), verses 38-39)

مَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ

("What has been revealed to you from your Lord")

("Mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika")

The verse does not specify exactly what has been revealed, rather it is implied with the relative particle **"what"** *(mā al-mawṣūliyyah)*; this is for the "purpose of aggrandization" *(ta'ẓīm)*. The reader will notice that the verb is in the "passive past tense" *(al-māḍī al-majhūl)* to indicate the importance and essential part of the Message, and that it is something which has already been revealed by Allah *(al-manzūl)* prior to this verse, not something which is

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Message. However, some recent commentators, such as Muḥammad Shaḥrūr, have noted a difference between the words in that *al-tablīgh* denotes deliverance to a great number of people, whereas *al-iblāgh* denotes directed and comprehensive delivery. The strength of this thesis is somewhat debatable.

being revealed down to the Prophet ﷺ at that current time. There is another delicate point here garnered from the use of the passive construction: by contrast, if the active voice had been used (i.e., *mā anzala ilayka Rabbuka* - what your Lord revealed to you), then the semantic focus would instead have been on the revealer and the recipient of the Message (i.e., God and the Prophet ﷺ respectively), rather than the actual revelation; however, the syntactical construction as it stands places the grammatical focus on the Message itself and its being a revealed entity.

Another delicate point is the use of the expression *"from your Lord - min Rabbika"* to indicate that this Message is being revealed by Allah Himself, who is Nurturing and Constantly Guiding the Prophet ﷺ through His Providence. If the word "Allah" *(lafz al-Jalālah)* had been used here instead, then it would not have carried the same personal connotation. Therefore, a question naturally poses itself: Given that **'your Lord'** has revealed this commandment, how can there be any sense of postponement issuing from the Messenger?[15]

وَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ

("And if you do not do so, then you have not delivered His Message")

("Wa in lam taf'al, famā ballaghta Risālatahu")

This statement is a conditional sentence that alludes to the importance of "what was revealed to you from your Lord."

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[15] The *mafhūm* of this word *(mā)* is highly disputed, and like we discussed, it is the crux of the contention between the Shī'ah and the Ahl al-Sunnah. The Ahl al-Sunnah say that the meaning of *mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika* here is the "entirety of the Qurān," whereas the Shī'ah posit that it refers to a "specific Message that was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ." We will discuss this point in detail later in Contention #1, and whether it really makes a difference in the *misdāq* or not.

Although it issues in the form of a threat *(fī maqām al-tahdīd)*, it is inconceivable that the Noble Prophet ﷺ would need to be threatened to deliver Allah's revelation. Therefore, the semantic function of this sentence is in fact to emphasize the importance of this Message being delivered. In other words, the Prophet ﷺ is being told that this particular revelation is so paramount that if he does not deliver it, then it is as if he has not delivered the Message of Allah ﷻ at all. The tone here is indirect, whereby the "import is meant for the Muslims, even if the literal address may be directed towards the Noble Prophet ﷺ *(iyyāka a'anī wa ismā'ī yā jārah)*. In other words, it is as if the Muslims are being told: "Pay attention to this Message, because if the Prophet ﷺ does not deliver it, then it is as though he has not delivered Allah's Message at all."[16]

وَٱللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ ٱلنَّاس

("And Allah will protect you from the people")

("Wallāhu ya'ṣimuka minan nās")

This part of the verse indicates that the Prophet ﷺ was worried about delivering this message to the people, and therefore Allah ﷻ comforts him here. The use of the word "Allah" emphasizes His Omnipotence (compare this with *min Rabbika* earlier), and that He, Allah, is the One who will protect the Prophet ﷺ.[17]

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[16] Interestingly, there is one *qirā'ah* (transmitted recitation) of this verse that replaces *Risālatahū* (His Message) with *Risālātihī* (His Messages); this further emphasizes that all the Prophet's efforts in delivering the Divine Messages come to vain if he does not disclose this one Message that he is being instructed to deliver.

[17] Another subtle point is that Arabic is a VSO language (verb-subject-object) meaning that the standard order would require that the verb should come first. However, we see in this sentence that the subject, meaning Allah ﷻ is brought before the verb to emphasize that it is Allah Himself ﷻ Who will protect the Prophet ﷺ.

Secondly, the present-future tense *(muḍāri')* "will protect" *(ya'ṣimuka)* emphasizes that when the Prophet ﷺ delivers this message, Allah will protect him both in the present and in the future. The type of protection is not specified here, therefore implying generality *(al-ta'mīm)*. In other words, the Prophet ﷺ will be protected from any possible harm that could negatively impact the religion.

Thirdly, the use of the phrase 'the people' here *(al-nās)* implies that the fear of the Prophet ﷺ in delivering this Message was not in relation to a specific group of people; rather, he was hesitant to deliver it to the entire society because of a perceived threat from them.

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ

("Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving folk")

("Innallāha lā yahdil qawmal kāfirīn")

This sentence is a causative sentence *(jumlah ta'līliyyah)*; in other words, the Prophet ﷺ is being assured not to worry, because Allah ﷻ will not guide the efforts of those who try to cover the truth.

Two observations are specifically relevant here: First of all, the meaning of disbelievers *(al-kāfirīn)* here does not appear to be the terminological meaning directed to the Christians, Jews, or polytheists. Rather, it implies to the meaning of *kufr* - كفر - derived from the Arabic language of "someone who attempts to cover up the truth." The meaning of non-Muslim is not a correct implication here, as the context indicates that the focus is on those who seek to conceal or cloud the Prophet's Message. Secondly, the guidance referred to here is not in the sense of credal guidance to faith;

rather, it appears to mean that Allah ﷻ will not guide their endeavours in covering the truth to any fruition.[18]

Therefore, the *mafhūm* (understanding) of *mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika* (what has been revealed to you from your Lord) that we have derived thus far from analyzing this verse is as follows:

1. The Message that the Prophet ﷺ was being commanded to deliver was indeed a revelation from His Lord, not from his own desires.
2. The Matter which he was told to reveal was so important that not delivering it was equivalent to not delivering the entirety of the Message.
3. There was a palpable fear that the Prophet ﷺ possessed regarding the Message which he was being commanded to deliver.
4. The fear that the Prophet ﷺ had was not in relation to one group in particular, rather his fear was in relation to the general society.
5. There were individuals who tried to cover up this Message and harm the Prophet ﷺ; but Allah ﷻ Himself said that he would safeguard him (meaning the Prophet ﷺ), and not allow their efforts to succeed.

Thus far, this is the criteria for "*mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika*" – "what has been revealed to you from your Lord" that we have substantiated based on the verse itself. Now we will examine the verses immediately surrounding this one to derive a further understanding of this verse.

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[18] The clearest evidence of this is that many of the disbelievers *(kuffār)* of Makkah were guided to the Right Path. Allah ﷻ Himself states in the Qurān: "...He guides whomsoever He wills to the Straight Path." (Sūrah al Baqarah (2), verse 142)

Step 2: Analyzing the Verses Immediately Surrounding the Verse in Question

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا۟ ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةَ وَٱلْإِنجِيلَ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِم مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ لَأَكَلُوا۟ مِن فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِن تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ ۚ مِّنْهُمْ أُمَّةٌ مُّقْتَصِدَةٌ ۖ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ سَآءَ مَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

"And if only they had observed the Tawrāh (Torah) and the Injīl (Gospel), **and what was revealed to them from their Lord**, they would have surely consumed [provision] from above them and from beneath their feet [in great abundance]. Among them are people who are moderate, but many of them are of evil conduct." (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 66)

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ ۖ وَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُۥ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

"O Messenger, deliver **what has been revealed to you from Your Lord**; and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His Message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people." (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 67)

قُلْ يَٰٓأَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ لَسْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَىْءٍ حَتَّىٰ تُقِيمُوا۟ ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةَ وَٱلْإِنجِيلَ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُم مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ ۗ وَلَيَزِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُم مَّآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ طُغْيَٰنًا وَكُفْرًا ۖ فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

"Say: 'O People of the Book! You are upon nothing until you observe the Tawrāh (Torah) and the Injīl (Gospel), **and what was revealed to you (O *Ahl al-Kitāb*) from your Lord**.' And **what has been revealed to you from your**

> **Lord (O Muḥammad)** is certain to increase the transgression and disbelief of many of them. So do not grieve over the disbelieving people." (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 68)

In the above verses, we notice something very peculiar: the phrase *mā unzila ilay (him, ka, kum) min Rabbi (him, ka, kum)* ("what was revealed to you/them from your/their Lord") is mentioned several times in quick succession (highlighted in bold above).[19] We notice here that in reference to the People of the Book, this phrase is placed in apposition with the Tawrāh and the Injīl. This would imply that what is being referenced here for the People of the Book is a form of revelation outside the Tawrāh and the Injīl, which Allah ﷻ is stating that they should have upheld. In other words, they are being told that their religiosity does not hold any ground unless they uphold their formal Scriptures, plus a supplementary form of revelation (*mā unzila ilayhim min Rabbihim*).[20] By parallelism then, perhaps this is an allusion that the *mā unzila*

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[19] In fact, this phrase is mentioned approximately **seven times** in the context of this entire passage with these slight grammatical variations. There is no other passage in the Qurān where this phrase appears like this repeatedly.

[20] On a side note, we are told in the *aḥādīth* that this *"mā unzila ilayhim min Rabbihim"* was in fact the concept of *Wilāyah* [the leadership and guardianship of the *Ahl al-Bayt* ﷺ]:

> محمد بن يعقوب عن محمد بن إسماعيل عن الفضل بن شاذان عن حماد بن عيسى عن ربعي بن عبد الله عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام في قول الله عز وجل: ولو أنهم أقاموا التوراة والإنجيل وما أنزل إليهم من ربهم قال الولاية
>
> "Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb, narrates from Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, narrates from Faḍl ibn Shādhān, narrates from Ḥammād ibn 'Īsā, narrates from Rab'ī ibn 'Abdillāh, on the authority of Abū Ja'far ﷺ regarding Allah's ﷻ words: 'If only they upheld the Tawrāh, and the Injīl, and what was revealed to them from their Lord.'" He said: "(Meaning) the *Wilāyah*." *(Uṣūl al-Kāfī)*

ilayka min Rabbika in the Verse of *Tablīgh* is a revelation that has been given to the Prophet ﷺ outside of the Noble Qurān. In other words, the message that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was wary to deliver here was revealed by Allah ﷻ, but it is a form of supplementary revelation to the Qurān.[21]

With this hint, it may become apparent to those who really reflect on the context deeply that we do not need this point to formulate our argument. The most obvious conception that we derive from these verses is that what was revealed to the Noble Prophet ﷺ (*mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika*) will increase many of the *Ahl al-Kitāb* in transgression and disbelief. This is the main addition to our *mafhūm* which we can draw from these verses.

Step 3: Analyzing the Entire Passage

Many people often stop at simply analyzing the preceding and subsequent verses without looking at the entire passage in context, and we contend that this is a huge mistake. For if a careful observer were to read the passage in context, then we believe that the understanding *(mafhūm)* of *mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika* would become noticeably clear.

Before we begin, we would like to remind the readers that our goal here is simply analyzing the context without regard for historical considerations at this time (i.e., when certain verses were revealed). The Qurān is not necessarily arranged in a historical way, rather it is organized by its themes; although historical discussions have its place and should not be ignored, it should not feature as prominently in a primary contextual analysis of the

[21] This would therefore imply that sufficing with the Qurān alone is not valid; rather, a Muslim is also bound to follow the non-scriptural forms of revelation revealed to the Noble Prophet ﷺ as well. It would also imply that what the Prophet ﷺ is being instructed to deliver is not the Qurān; nonetheless, this is a subtle theoretical point which we will not rely on for our argument.

passage.[22] Therefore, it is incorrect for someone to contend with us that we are interpreting these verses "against their historical context" because all we are attempting to do in this discussion is demonstrate the general concepts and themes of the preceding verses to build a deeper understanding *(mafhūm)*.[23]

We will begin with verse 49 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah and progress forward from there, selecting those verses which are the most relevant for our analysis:

وَأَنِ ٱحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَآءَهُمْ وَٱحْذَرْهُمْ أَن يَفْتِنُوكَ عَنۢ بَعْضِ مَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ ۖ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا۟ فَٱعْلَمْ أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ أَن يُصِيبَهُم بِبَعْضِ ذُنُوبِهِمْ ۗ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ ٱلنَّاسِ لَفَٰسِقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

"And judge between them by what Allah has revealed and (do) not follow their vain desires; and **beware of them lest they tempt you away from some (of) what Allah has revealed to you.** And if they turn away, then know that Allah only intends to afflict them with some (of) their (own) sins. And indeed, many of the people (are) defiantly disobedient." (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 49)

أَفَحُكْمَ ٱلْجَٰهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ ۚ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

"Is it then the judgement of the Age of Ignorance they seek? And who (is) better than Allah (in) judgement for a people (who) firmly believe?" (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 50)

These verses serve as a preamble to the entire discussion, as they allude to the fact that there was a group of people who were

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[22] The historical context is of course an important *qarīnah* (contextual indicator) for this Verse of *Tablīgh*, and we will discuss these issues in the final section of the context analysis.

[23] As the common adage goes: *"Al-'ibrah bi 'umūm al-lafz lā bi khuṣūṣ al-sabab"* – "The import is by the generality of the utterance, not the specific reason."

inclined towards ignorance *(jāhiliyyah)* and sought to dissuade the Prophet ﷺ from disclosing a part of the revelation sent down to him by Allah ﷻ.[24] What exactly was the judgement of the Age of Ignorance that they sought? This is what the next verses will clarify for us.

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تَتَّخِذُواْ ٱلْيَهُودَ وَٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰٓ أَوْلِيَآءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُم مِّنكُمْ فَإِنَّهُۥ مِنْهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾

"O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and the Christians as *awliyā'*. They are *awliyā'* of one another. And whoever takes them as *awliyā'* from among you, then indeed, they are [one] of them. Indeed, Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people." (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 51)

فَتَرَى ٱلَّذِينَ فِى قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ يُسَٰرِعُونَ فِيهِمْ يَقُولُونَ نَخْشَىٰٓ أَن تُصِيبَنَا دَآئِرَةٌ ۚ فَعَسَى ٱللَّهُ أَن يَأْتِىَ بِٱلْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ مِّنْ عِندِهِۦ فَيُصْبِحُواْ عَلَىٰ مَآ أَسَرُّواْ فِىٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ نَٰدِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

"And you see those in whose hearts is a disease hasten to them saying: 'We fear that we may be stricken with a misfortune.' But perhaps Allah will bring victory or a decision from Him. Then they will become regretful for what they had concealed within themselves." (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 52)

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[24] This serves as a powerful *qarīnah* (contextual indicator) that what is being alluded to in the Verse of *Tablīgh* is not the entire revelation, as some have posited. Rather, the Prophet ﷺ is clearly being instructed to deliver part of what has been revealed to him - a part which some were endeavouring to prevent him from revealing.

In order to be able to comprehend these verses, we need to first understand the meaning of the Arabic root (و-ل-ي) *'wa-la-ya'* so that we may better appreciate the plural here, which is *awliyā'*, a word that we deliberately left untranslated above. In his book, *Mufradāt Gharīb al-Qurān*, al-Iṣfahānī states:

> الولاء والتوالي أن يحصل شيئان فصاعدا حصولا ليس بينهما ما ليس منهما، ويستعار ذلك للقرب من حيث المكان ومن حيث النسبة ومن حيث الدين ومن حيث الصداقة والنصرة والاعتقاد والولاية النصرة، والولاية تولى الامر
>
> *"Al-walā'* and *al-tawālī* imply that two or more things have achieved a state whereby there is nothing else between them; as such, these words are used to imply proximity in distance, lineage, religion, friendship, assistance, or belief. *Al-wilāyah* is assistance, and *al-walāyah* is disposing of the affairs."

In interpreting the word *awliyā'* (plural of the active participle *walī*), a majority of commentators *(mufassirīn)* interpret the word as implying 'love' *(al-maḥabbah)*, or 'assistance/alliance' *(al-nuṣrah/al-taḥāluf)*. However, the other meaning which posits itself is 'leadership or authority' *(al-sulṭah)*, especially when we consider that the context of the verse is telling the believers that if they do *tawallī* of the Christians and Jews, then they will become of their kind.[25]

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[25] In his commentary *(tafsīr)*, *Al-Furqān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān*, Āyatullāh Ṣādeqī Tehrānī has a beautiful elucidation of this point where he states:

> الولاية المنهي عنها تعم سائر الولاية إلى ولاية السلطة بل هي المقصودة العليا من سلبية الولاية فإن ولاية الحب هنا منفية بقضية الإيمان وولاية النصرة هي عوان بينهما...فالمؤمنون طول التاريخ هم بحاجة إلى تحزب صامد دفعا عن كل سلطة كافرة عليهم هكذا على سائر الأحزاب التي ليست فيها ولاية الله الموحدة المثلثة.
>
> "The *wilāyah* that is being prohibited here is comprehensive, encompassing the *wilāyah* of authority as well. This is the ultimate import in stripping them of *wilāyah*; indeed, the prerogative of

Hence, we garner from these two verses that there was a party among the Muslims with diseased hearts who hearkened to the Christians and Jews, yielding to their friendship, alliance, and authority. They did so based on the excuse that "perhaps an unfortunate circumstance will occur" whereby Islam will lose hold in society.[26]

Continuing on, Allah ﷻ then says:

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faith already negates the *wilāyah* of love for them, and the *wilāyah* of assistance is in an intermediary position between these two imports...this is because throughout history, the believers have needed a strong consolidation to repel away every disbelieving authority, as well as those parties that do not relent to this triangle of *wilāyah*."

[26] Some commentators of the Qurān such as Sayyid Qutb in his *Ẓilāl al-Qurān* state that interpreting *wilāyah* of authority into the import of this verse is not feasible (فبعيد جدا أن يكون بين المسلمين من يميل إلى اتباع اليهود والنصارى في الدين) because none of the Muslims sought the leadership of Christians and Jews in religion.

However, indeed there were Muslims who after the Battle of Uḥud sought out the Christians and Jews as their religious authorities:

قال السدي: لما كانت وقعة أحد اشتدت على طائفة من الناس وتخوفوا أن يدال عليهم الكفار فقال رجل من المسلمين: أنا ألحق بفلان اليهودي وآخذ منه أمانا إني أخاف أن يدال علينا اليهود، وقال رجل آخر: أما أنا فألحق بفلان النصراني من أهل الشام وآخذ منه أمانا، فأنزل الله تعالى هذه الآية ينهاهما

"Al-Sudī states: 'After (the Battle of) Uḥud, a group of people became grieved and scared that the disbelievers would reassume reign, therefore a man among the Muslims said: 'I will join such-and-such Jew and get his protection because I am afraid that the Jews will become sovereign over us.' Another man said: 'I will join such-and-such Christian in Damascus and get protection from him.' Then Allah revealed this verse.'"

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ مَن يَرۡتَدَّ مِنكُمۡ عَن دِينِهِۦ فَسَوۡفَ يَأۡتِي ٱللَّهُ بِقَوۡمٖ يُحِبُّهُمۡ وَيُحِبُّونَهُۥٓ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى ٱلۡكَٰفِرِينَ يُجَٰهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوۡمَةَ لَآئِمٖۚ ذَٰلِكَ فَضۡلُ ٱللَّهِ يُؤۡتِيهِ مَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٥٤

"O you who believe! Whoever turns back among you from one's religion, then soon Allah will bring forth [in place of them] people whom He loves and they will love Him, [who are] humble towards the believers, and stern towards the disbelievers, striving in the way of Allah, not fearing the blame of any critic. That is the Grace of Allah, He grants to whomsoever He wills; and Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing." (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 54)

When analyzing these verses, it becomes clear that this was a major problem in the Islamic society whereby individuals were conceding to the friendship, alliance, and authority of the Christians and the Jews. This was not a menial group of apparent Muslims at all, because the verse says that Allah ﷻ will replace these individuals with "people" in their entirety. In other words, there was this inclination among a substantial number of those who professed belief to turn their backs on Islam, and then gravitate towards the *wilāyah* of the Christians and the Jews.[27]

This takes us back to a previous verse, Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 50, which mentions that some individuals were hearkening back to the Age of Ignorance *(Jāhiliyyah)*, trying to re-establish their order in society. Before Islam, the Jews and Christians in the Arabian Peninsula had a certain degree of *wilāyah* in these three

[27] Also consider the Qurānic verse: "That is because they said to those who repeatedly hated what Allah sent down that: 'We will obey you in some issues...'" (Sūrah Muḥammad (47), verse 26)

capacities: love, assistance, and authority. Let us explain these below:

1. ***Wilāyah al-Mahabbah (Love):*** The Arabs during the Age of Ignorance and the Jews had close ties of affection, such that they used to share cultural heritage and ideas. For instance, the Arabs of Madīnah would learn magic and sorcery from their Jewish neighbours. Unfortunately, these close ties even extended through the Islamic era. Therefore, we find a famous narration known as *Ḥadīth al-Tahawwuk* which is as follows:

وَعَنْ جَابِرٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حِينَ أَتَاهُ عُمَرُ فَقَالَ إِنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَحَادِيثَ مِنْ يَهُودَ تُعْجِبُنَا أَفَتَرَى أَنْ نَكْتُبَ بَعْضَهَا؟ فَقَالَ: «أَمُتَهَوِّكُونَ أَنْتُمْ كَمَا تَهَوَّكَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى؟ لَقَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِهَا بَيْضَاءَ نَقِيَّةً وَلَوْ كَانَ مُوسَى حَيًّا مَا وَسِعَهُ إِلَّا اتِّبَاعِي

"Jābir narrates that 'Umar came to the Prophet, peace of Allah be upon him and blessings, saying: 'We hear (things) from the Jewish traditions that which charms us, so do you think we should write some of them down?' So he (the Prophet) replied: 'Are you in a state of confusion like the Jews and the Christians? I have brought (the Message) to you white (clear) and pure, and if Mūsā were still alive, he would have had no option but to follow me.'"[28]

Unfortunately, even though both the Qurān and the *Sunnah* warned us about this, i.e., the advice to be wary of taking fancy towards the religious traditions of the Jews and Christians, this guidance was not taken. In fact, we see that this trend continued even after the demise of the Prophet ﷺ, as we observe the first and second caliphs befriending the storytellers *(al-qaṣṣāṣīn)* of the People of the Book (individuals such as Ka'b al-Aḥbār) who

[28] *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, Book 1, Ḥadīth 169.

transmitted many of the *Isrā'īliyyāt*[29] present in our religious literature today.[30]

2. ***Wilāyah al-Nusrah (Mutual Assistance):*** The Jews formed alliances with the ignorant *(jāhilī)* Arabs to protect them from threats, contracting with them a yearly penance for this protection. In turn, the Jews of Yathrib would hire Arabs to work on their farmlands and agricultural property. This continued in the Prophetic era when many of the Jews of Yathrib maintained their previous relationships with Arabs on this basis. The confederacy of the Jewish tribes with the polytheists of Makkah was also very well-known.

3. ***Wilāyah al-Sultah (Authority):*** This authority was not necessarily political or religious, more so it was cultural and intellectual. Manifestations of this form of *wilāyah* in the Age of Ignorance were as follows:

a. The Arabs would often seek consultation with the Jews in their *Dār al-Nadwah*[31] where a vast number of Rabbis and Jewish leaders would conspire.

b. A Rabbi known as Ka'b al-Ashraf was among the top leaders of the Jews at the time of the Prophet ﷺ; his stature

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[29] *Isrā'īliyyāt* (in Arabic: اسرائیلیات) are fabricated narrations of foreign origin imported into the Islamic corpus; specifically, narrations that derive from Judeo-Christian sources are classified under this header.

[30] See the Persian article, *Vākāvī-ye-Mafhūm-o-Miṣdāqī-ye-Āye-ye-Tablīgh bar Asās-e-Dilālat-e-Siyāq* (Analyzing the Conception and Representation of the Verse of Conveyance based on the Significance of Its Context) for more details about this.

[31] *Dār al-Nadwah* - This was a place in Makkah where the chiefs used to gather to decide on various crucial matters. Some important historical decisions which were made at *Dār al-Nadwah* include: The Treaty of Khuzā'ah and Banu Hāshim, *Ḥilf al-Fuḍūl* (a pre-Islamic pact made between several Qurayshī clans in Makkah to establish justice for all), and Quraysh's decision to murder the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

was such that the major tribes in Yathrib (the Aws and Khazraj) would go to him to mediate their disputes.

c. The Arabs often resorted to the Jews about Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his revelations; in fact, a delegation of the polytheists *(mushrikīn)* from Makkah were specifically sent to Yathrib to inquire about the Noble Prophet of Islam ﷺ. The Jews would then challenge the Prophet ﷺ with convoluted questions about their history to try to stump him and cast aspersions on his Prophethood.

d. The Arabs would rely on the Jews to create talismans for them and perform sorcery.

e. The Jews were considered experts in the fields of agriculture and farming; meanwhile, the Christians (especially those in Yemen and Damascus) were considered expert merchants.[32]

Therefore, we see that the Qurān is emphasizing a grave dilemma in the Islamic society whereby a sizeable group of believers wanted a return to the old social order in the pre-Islamic ignorant society. In that previous society, the Jews and Christians had maintained a sense of *wilāyah* with the Arabs whereby they were befriended, aided, and sought after for intellectual and cultural guidance. However, Allah ﷻ prohibited the believers from forming these connections with the People of the Book *(Ahl al-Kitāb)*, and warned them that this would be tantamount to reneging on Islam.[33] We see an indication here where Allah ﷻ promises that He

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[32] For more details on the state of relations in the Era of Ignorance *(Jāhilīyyah)* between the Arabs and the Jews/Christians, advanced readers may refer to Dr. Jawād 'Alī's excellent encyclopedic work in Arabic on this topic, entitled *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-'Arab Qabl al-Islam*, Volume 12, Chapter 77 and Chapter 82.

[33] The reference here is specifically to the *Ahl al-Kitāb* who oppose and mock the religion of Islam, cooperating with the polytheist forces that aim to dismantle it. Otherwise, neutral parties are not subject to this

will replace this group of people with another group who will fulfill His commands without hesitation.[34]

Now, we will turn our attention to the next verse, and we will find this same theme of *wilāyah* continuing to elucidate itself:

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَهُمْ رَٰكِعُونَ۝

"Surely, your **only** *Walī* is Allah and His Messenger, and those who believe, who establish the prayer, and give alms while they are in the state of bowing down *(rukū')*." (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 55)

Naturally, this famous verse - *Āyah al-Wilāyah* - is worthy of a separate discussion about its *mafhūm* (conceptional understanding) and the *misdāq* (particular representation), given that it is also somewhat disputed among the Shī'ah and the Ahl al-Sunnah. However, deeply delving into its meanings is not necessary for our argument per se [we pray that we can receive the Divine providence *(tawfīq)* to do a proper analysis of this verse in the future].

The least common denominator in contextually understanding this verse is that after categorically negating the *wilāyah* of the Christians and the Jews, this verse serves to affirm the exclusive *Wilāyah* of Allah ﷻ. By extension, this *Wilāyah* also encompasses

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Divinely-commanded dissociation (as per Sūrah al-Mumtahanah (60), verse 8).

[34] Although this is not necessarily directly related to our discussion, commentators such as Āyatullāh Sādeqī Tehrānī have proposed that this is a reference to the followers of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه who will come at the end of times. They base this on the fact that the word *"sawfa"* is an Arabic particle used for 'the distant future.' Please refer to his *tafsīr* called *Tafsīr al-Furqān* for more details.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the believer who gave alms while in genuflection (the state of *rukū'*).[35]

وَقَالَتِ ٱلْيَهُودُ يَدُ ٱللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ ۚ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلُعِنُوا۟ بِمَا قَالُوا۟ ۘ بَلْ يَدَاهُ
مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَآءُ ۚ وَلَيَزِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُم مَّآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن
رَّبِّكَ طُغْيَٰنًا وَكُفْرًا ۚ وَأَلْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ ٱلْعَدَٰوَةَ وَٱلْبَغْضَآءَ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ ۚ كُلَّمَآ
أَوْقَدُوا۟ نَارًا لِّلْحَرْبِ أَطْفَأَهَا ٱللَّهُ ۙ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا ۚ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
ٱلْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

"And the Jews say: 'Allah's Hand is shackled!' It is their own hands that are shackled; and they are cursed because of their statement. Nay, both of His Hands are stretched out: He dispenses as He wills. And **what has been revealed to you from your Lord** *(mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika)* is certain to increase the transgression and disbelief of many of them. And We have cast enmity and hatred among them until the Day of Judgement; every time they light the fires of war, Allah extinguishes them; and they labour hard to spread corruption on the Earth: and Allah does not love the spreaders of corruption." (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 64)

If we are to read this statement of the Jews in context, it would imply that they are stripping Allah ﷻ of His *Wilāyah* in claiming that His Hands are tied.[36] They are postulating that Allah ﷻ is the

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[35] Shī'ah commentators are unanimous that this verse, specifically "those who believe, who establish the prayer, and give alms while they are in the state of bowing down *(rukū')*" was revealed regarding Imām 'Alī ؑ. They base this view on several narrations from both Shī'ah and Sunnī sources. The Ahl al-Sunnah largely accept this view as well, although they believe it is only one *miṣdāq* (particular representation) of the verse (for instance, see al-Ālūsī's commentary on this verse).

[36] The *tafāsīr* on this verse mention two other possible interpretations of the Jewish statement "Allah's Hand is shackled" and they are:

one whose *Wilāyah* no longer plays an active role in the world, while their *Wilāyah* is still active (as in they are *awlā bi al-taṣarruf* - free to act as they please). In response to this, Allah ﷻ curses them and states that rather it is 'their hands' which are shackled; this is a highly salient statement after Allah ﷻ prohibits the believers from yielding to the *wilāyah* of the Christians and the Jews.

Next, we see the statement that Allah's Hands are both open, again an allusion to the fact that His *Wilāyah* is living and free flowing in the world. The extension of His Hands and His free dispersal refers to His bestowing His *Wilāyah* to whomsoever He Wills.

We then see a very interesting statement that we have highlighted in bold; and this is the same phraseology that we see in the Verse of *Tablīgh* being used here as well. Allah ﷻ states *mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika* (what has been revealed to you from your Lord) will increase many of the *Ahl al-Kitab* in transgression and disbelief. Notice that this statement is repeated exactly as is after the Verse of *Tablīgh* in Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 68, as though to highlight this passage in between brackets.

Finally, the verse ends by noting that there is no true *wilāyah* between the disbelievers of the Christians and the Jews; rather Allah ﷻ has inspired hatred and enmity between them such that

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1) That the God of Islam is poor because the Muslims are not wealthy like them;

2) That they (referring to the Jews) are exempted from the punishment of God.

However, considering the context, these views seem farfetched. Rather, the more appropriate meaning appears to be that they stated God created the world, but then sat back, i.e., that He no longer plays an active role in the world (please see *Tafsīr al-'Ayyāshī* and *Tafsīr al-Qummī* for narrations that support this interpretation).

their efforts amount to nothing. Their plans to dismantle Islam by igniting mischief will continuously be dashed by Allah ﷻ.

In other words, the context immediately suggests that something was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ related to *Wilāyah* which made those who disbelieve from the Jews even more inclined towards transgression and disbelief. It is something which definitively puts a nail in the coffin of their hopes regarding Islam with Allah ﷻ dousing all their stratagems.[37]

From the entire contextual analysis above, we can derive the following *maḍāmīn* (imports) in gist from these verses:

1. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is told to be aware lest the people try to tempt him away from delivering a part of Allah's revelation.
2. The people referenced include a sizeable portion of those who professed Islam, but were inclining back towards the Days of Ignorance *(Jāhiliyyah)*. These individuals sought to reinstitute the old social structure and re-establish their ties with the Jews and Christians.
3. Allah ﷻ declares that the Christians and Jews have no *wilāyah* of love, assistance, or authority with the Muslims; and those who incline towards them have left Islam and joined them.
4. Allah ﷻ then proposes the exclusive substitute for the believers: His Own *Wilāyah*, and by extension that of the final Prophet of Islam ﷺ and the believer (who met the criterion of giving alms while in the state of *rukū'*).

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[37] Notice here the perfect parallelism of the import here with the Verse of the Completion of the Religion *(Āyah al-Ikmāl al-Dīn)*, which we contend is also intimately tied with the Verse of Propagation *(Āyah al-Tablīgh)*: "...this day the disbelievers have despaired of your religion, so do not fear them but fear Me. This day I have perfected your religion and have completed My favour upon you and have chosen Islam for you as the religion." (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 3)

5. Allah ﷻ rebukes the Jews for negating His authority, and then He states that His *Wilāyah* is freely dispensed as **He** pleases.
6. There is then an indication that in this entire context, **something has been revealed to the Noble Prophet ﷺ from his Lord** that will increase the disbelief and transgression of the Jews.

In the face of the above context, a discerning reader can therefore easily surmise that what has been revealed to the Prophet ﷺ *(mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika* - what has been revealed to you from your Lord) is something related to *Wilāyah*, as the entire preceding passage before this phrase is entirely about this topic!

2

The Queries on Āyah al-Tablīgh

Before our credible *(miṣdāq)* analysis, there are a few other important points we may derive that can help us in constructing our notion *(mafhūm)*. We can derive these pieces of data from a more detailed analysis of other Qurānic verses related to the Verse of *Tablīgh*. But before that, we would specifically like to address some relevant questions:

1. Exactly where was the Verse of *Tablīgh* revealed?

In general, Muslim scholars are unanimous that Sūrah al-Mā'idah was among the last sūrahs to be revealed to the Prophet of Islam ﷺ in the Medinite period, with many of its verses being revealed during the Prophet's Final (and only) Pilgrimage *(Ḥajjat al-Wadā')*. However, there are some individuals who propose that the Verse of *Tablīgh* was revealed in the early Makkan period in the beginning of the Prophet's Appointment *(al-Bi'thah)*. They claim that the fear of the Prophet ﷺ was tied to the disbelievers of Quraysh, since he was apprehensive to spread the Islamic message and feared the social repercussions.[38] However, this argument falls on its face because of several reasons:

a. Firstly, the context does not support this contention; as we observed, the verses are about the People of the Book *(Ahl al-Kitāb)* before and after it, and therefore one has no choice but to include the *Ahl al-Kitāb* among the folks who were attempting to subvert the message *(mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika* - what has been revealed to you from your Lord). The *Ahl al-Kitāb* were in fact quite sympathetic to

[38] One of these individuals is the famous Salafī polemicist, 'Uthmān al-Khamīs.

Islam at the beginning of the Prophet's mission, as the story of Waraqah ibn Nawfal illustrates.[39] They were enthusiastic and impressed with the Monotheistic teachings of the Prophet ﷺ. It was only much later when they realized that the Prophet's influence in society was increasing that they rose against the Muslims.[40] Therefore, there is absolutely no reason why the Prophetic message would "increase many of them in transgression and disbelief" during the earlier stage.

b. Secondly, when we examine the conditional sentence within this verse, we can become quite confident that this is a later verse. It states: "If you do not (do so), then you have not delivered His Message." In order for this threat to hold water, a significant amount of the Islamic teachings must have already been delivered by the Prophet ﷺ to the people. In other words, the apodosis - which means the main clause of a conditional sentence *(jawāb al-sharṭ)* - immediately implies that a large portion of the Islamic message had already been received by the audience. Otherwise, this whole statement would have become futile *(laghwī)*[41] because how would this threat hold any weight when the Prophet ﷺ has not even yet delivered much of the message anyhow?

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[39] Waraqah was the paternal first cousin of Lady Khadījah ؓ, and was one of the first converts from Christianity to Islam.

[40] This fact is expounded upon in detail in Chapter 77 of Dr. Jawād 'Alī's book, *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-'Arab Qabl al-Islam.*

[41] Some commentators like Al-Rāzī and Al-Ālūsī assumed that this verse is not commanding the Prophet ﷺ to deliver any message but is rather of a more general import that the Prophet ﷺ must deliver the whole revelation in its entirety. We will address this contention in-depth in our contentions section.

c. The style of the address is quite reminiscent of the Medinite period. When a person examines the type of direct addresses used for the Prophet ﷺ in the Makkan period, there is a sense of lenience without any threat *(al-tahdīd)*. However, in this verse, there is no such leniency, rather, the emphasis is quite direct that the Prophet ﷺ must complete the revelation. In contrast, the style of the Makkan revelations incorporate a soothing and comforting tone. For example, consider the following verses:

إِقْرَأْ بِٱسْمِ رَبِّكَ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ ۝١ خَلَقَ ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۝٢

"Read in the Name of your Lord who created, who created the human being from a clot." (Sūrah al-'Alaq (96), verses 1-2)

As well as:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْمُدَّثِّرُ ۝١ قُمْ فَأَنذِرْ ۝٢ وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ ۝٣

"O cloaked one! Stand up, then warn; and revere your Lord." (Surah al-Muddaththir (74), verses 1-3)

d. Given that Sūrah al-Mā'idah is one of the very last sūrahs revealed in the Medinite period, this would imply that a single verse in Sūrah al-Mā'idah was left hanging for almost 23 years before finally being appended to the rest of its context! This is a ludicrous proposition which is noted by some commentators.[42]

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[42] For instance, regarding this idea, Ibn 'Āshūr states the following in his book, *Al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*:

فنحن إذن بين احتمالتين أحدهما أن تكون هذه الآية نزلت سبب خاص اقتضى إعادة تثبيت الرسول على تبليغ شيء مما يثقل تبليغه وثانيهما أن تكون هذه الآية نزلت من قبل نزول هذه السورة وهو الذي تواطأت عليه أخبار في سبب نزولها. فأما هذا الاحتمال الثاني فلا

e. The biography *(al-sīrah)* of the Prophet ﷺ and his courageous personality go against this proposition, since it is known that he never faltered at all in delivering the message to the disbelievers. In fact, he was one of the most fearless of Prophets ﷺ in delivering the message to his people. As Allah ﷻ states in the Qurān, he was the chosen one *(al-Mustafā)* for a reason, may Allah's mercy and blessings be upon him and his family:

أَللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ

"...Allah is most Knowledgeable about where (to whom) to deposit His Message..." (Sūrah al-An'ām (6), verse 124)

We see a further indication that the Noble Prophet ﷺ would hasten to deliver the Qurān in the Makkan period:

لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهِۦ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ

ينبغي اعتباره لاقتضائه أن تكون هذه الآية بقيت سنين غير ملحقة بسورة ولا جائز أن تكون مقروءة بمفردها وبذلك تندحض جميع الأخبار الواردة في أسباب النزول التي تذكر حوادث كلها حصلت في أزمان قبل زمن نزول هذه السورة

"We are therefore left between two possibilities: the first is that this verse was revealed for a specific reason that necessitated a further encouragement of the Messenger to deliver something which was difficult for him to deliver; and the second is that this verse was revealed much before the revelation of this sūrah as some narrations suggest. As for this second possibility, it is not even worthy of consideration because it implies that this verse remained for years not attached to any sūrah. It is not feasible for it to have been recited in isolation; therefore, because of this, all of the narrations among the circumstances of revelation that mention events that transpired before the revelation of this sūrah would be destroyed."

> "Do not move your tongue with it (O Muḥammad), to make haste with it (the recitation of the Qurān)." (Sūrah al-Qiyāmah (75), verse 16)

If this was the habit of the Prophet ﷺ in the Makkan period, then how could one feasibly propose that he held back on disclosing the Message, fearing for his life amidst the Medinan society?! Indeed, he was the most foremost in bearing calamities and tribulations, doing so without the least bit of hesitation as the Makkans hurled insults of "sorcerer," "soothsayer," "madman," "poet," etc. upon him; as he himself is reported to have said ﷺ:

مَا أُوذِيَ نَبِيٌّ مِثْلَ مَا أُوذِيتُ قَطُّ

> "No Prophet has ever been harmed (and hurt) the way that I have been (harmed and hurt)."[43]

From all the above reasons, it becomes quite clear that it is completely untenable to propose that this verse was revealed in the Makkan period. Therefore, it follows that it was revealed in the Medinite period, and most likely at the end of the Prophet's life like the rest of Sūrah al-Mā'idah; that is, after the Islamic message had already spread far and wide in the Arabian Peninsula.

2. What was the nature of the fear that the Prophet ﷺ possessed in delivering this Message?

If Islam was already firmly entrenched in the Arab society at the time of this verse, then what could it possibly have been that the Prophet ﷺ feared? As we mentioned above, the Prophet ﷺ **never**

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[43] This narration is mentioned in other sources with different variations in wording such as:

ما أُوذيَ أحَدٌ ما أُوذيتُ في اللهِ.

https://www.dorar.net/hadith/sharh/137236

Al-Albāni has graded two versions of it as *Ḥasan*. *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, Vol. 3, Pg. 130.

feared for his own life, nor was he intimidated by the loss of possible reputation or social standing among the people in the Makkan period. In the Medinite period, what would he possibly have had to personally fear given that he had already achieved prominence and repute in his society? Thus, why was the Prophet ﷺ worried in the Medinite period about this Message?

Another important verse in the Qurān informs us about another incident when the Prophet ﷺ had feared delivering Allah's command:

وَإِذْ تَقُولُ لِلَّذِىٓ أَنْعَمَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَٱتَّقِ ٱللَّهَ وَتُخْفِى فِى نَفْسِكَ مَا ٱللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ وَتَخْشَى ٱلنَّاسَ وَٱللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَن تَخْشَىٰهُ ۖ فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ زَيْدٌ مِّنْهَا وَطَرًا زَوَّجْنَٰكَهَا لِكَىْ لَا يَكُونَ عَلَى ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرَجٌ فِىٓ أَزْوَٰجِ أَدْعِيَآئِهِمْ إِذَا قَضَوْا۟ مِنْهُنَّ وَطَرًا ۚ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ ٱللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا ﴿٣٧﴾

"And when you said to the one upon whom Allah and you had bestowed favour: 'Hold on to your wife and fear Allah.' But you concealed within yourself what Allah (was to) disclose; **you feared the people [about marrying the divorced wife of the adopted son, Zayd] when Allah is more worthy for you to fear**. Then when Zayd divorced her, We married her to you so that there would be no discomfort for the believers concerning the wives (of) their adopted sons when they have been divorced. And the Command of Allah is always accomplished. (Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33), verse 37)

As this verse indicates, there was a taboo among the Arabs in marrying the divorced wife of one's **adopted** son, as adopted sons were considered equivalent to one's own actual kin. Therefore, in breaking this taboo, we see that the Prophet ﷺ had felt a sense of trepidation - but this too was not for his own life or his reputation.

Rather, it was because he was afraid that reneging on an age-old custom of the Arabs could lead them to rebellion and threaten the dissolution of the Prophethood *(Risālah)*.

Therefore, we gather from this cross-textual comparison that the Prophet's hesitation in delivering Allah's Messages were never borne out of any fear for his own self. Rather, it was because of his fear that the Messengership could be compromised if he delivered this message. Hence, in the Verse of *Tablīgh*, we substantiate that the Prophet ﷺ was worried that the message he was going to deliver could threaten to destroy the entire Prophethood that he had delivered to the people up until that point.[44]

3. What was the nature of the protection that Allah ﷻ promised the Prophet ﷺ?

If we were to take this verse in an absolute sense and say that the verse means that Allah ﷻ would protect the Prophet ﷺ from every type of injury or hardship, then we would certainly be incorrect because this contradicts the Qurān itself:

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[44] Āyatullāh Ṣādeqī Ṭehrānī corroborates this observation in his *tafsīr* where he says:

> وحتى إن كان يخشى الناس أحيانا لم يكن يخشاهم على حياته بل كان يخشاهم على رسالته أن تهتك أو يفتك بها كما في قصة زواجه بزوجة زيد بعد أن قضى منها وطرا لأنه خلاف سنة جاهلية عريقة ولكنه طبق أمر الله على خشيته تلك التي هي في الحق خشية على رسالة الله
>
> "Even if the Prophet feared the people at times, this was never due to fear of his life, rather it was due to fear of the Message being dissolved or disintegrated. This can be seen in the story of his marriage to the wife of Zayd after Zayd divorced her, because this was an old Arab custom; but nonetheless he applied Allah's command despite his fear - a fear for the sake of Allah's Message."

وَكَأَيِّن مِّن نَّبِيٍّ قَٰتَلَ مَعَهُۥ رِبِّيُّونَ كَثِيرٌ فَمَا وَهَنُوا۟ لِمَآ أَصَابَهُمْ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوا۟ وَمَا ٱسْتَكَانُوا۟ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُحِبُّ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾

"And how many a Prophet had God-devoted men (who) fought alongside (with them); they did not lose heart for what befell them in the way of Allah and they did not weaken, nor give in. And Allah loves the patient ones." (Sūrah Āle 'Imrān (3), verse 146)

Rather, the meaning of the protection *(al-'iṣmah)* here is given to us by the end of verse 67 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah whereby Allah ﷻ states that "He does not guide (the efforts) of those who cover the truth." As we discussed in the detailed discussion about the Verse of *Tablīgh*, this is a causative sentence. In other words, it means that 'O Messenger, Allah will protect you in your delivery of this Message, since He will not let the efforts of those who try to hide the truth reach any fruition.'

Therefore, the type of protection being promised by Allah ﷻ is one that will safeguard Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ in delivering the Message and ensure the preservation of that said Message. It is a guarantee that the Prophet ﷺ will be able to achieve his objective in making this announcement without the least bit of harm reaching him. There may be attempts by others to hide the truth of this Message, but Allah's Truth will not be suppressed or compromised.

4. What did the *Ahl al-Kitāb* who were mentioned before and after this verse possibly have to do with the Message that the Prophet ﷺ was going to deliver?

The final question we would like to address in this segment is that if this was a message in the late Medinite period that the Prophet ﷺ was told to deliver, why would it increase the *Ahl al-Kitāb* in their disbelief and transgression?

As many commentators *(mufassirīn)* have pointed out, the *Ahl al-Kitāb* had been completely subjugated close to the end of the Prophet's life, and they could not possibly pose any threat.[45] However, the Qurān informs us that the *Ahl al-Kitāb* were longing to do away with Islam and have the Muslims revert back to their old ignorant *(jāhilī)* ways:

وَدَّ كَثِيرٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ إِيمَٰنِكُمْ كُفَّارًا حَسَدًا مِّنْ عِندِ أَنفُسِهِم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ ٱلْحَقُّ ۖ فَٱعْفُوا۟ وَٱصْفَحُوا۟ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِىَ ٱللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِۦٓ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾

"Many of the People of the Book *(Ahl al-Kitāb)* wish that you would revert back to disbelief after you have believed; this is wrought out of jealousy from within themselves after the truth has become clear to them. Therefore, pardon and overlook until Allah comes with His command; indeed, Allah is Powerful over all things." (Sūrah Baqarah (2), verse 109)

Therefore, it stands to reason that during this period, the *Ahl al-Kitāb,* along with the hypocrites, were waiting for the Prophet's life to come to an end so that they could do away with Islam and re-establish the previous ignorant *(jāhilī)* customs. In fact, they tried many times to assassinate the Prophet ﷺ precisely with this goal in mind. However, it appears that the Prophet ﷺ made an announcement towards the end of his life that would perpetuate Islam, and in turn, this renewed many of the Christians and Jews in their disbelief and transgression against the religion.[46]

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[45] Unfortunately, the common trend among the commentators *(mufassirīn)* is to therefore deny that the Verse of *Tablīgh* has anything to do with the context about the *Ahl al-Kitāb.* However, we do not believe that this is a proper conclusion as we will explain.

[46] Āyatullāh Ṣādeqī Tehrānī is one of the very few scholars who has astutely made this observation where he says:

The Gist of the Understanding (*Mafhūm*) Derived from this Discussion

In concluding this section, we will consolidate the various conceptions *(mafāhīm)* that we were able to ascertain through this contextual analysis regarding the phrase *ma unzila ilayka min Rabbika* - what has been revealed to you from your Lord - as follows:

1. This verse was certainly revealed in the late Medinite period, towards the end of the Prophet's lifetime.
2. This verse will increase the *Ahl al-Kitāb* in their transgression and disbelief because this Message is guaranteeing the continued integrity of the Islamic message even after the Prophet's demise.
3. The Message that the final Prophet ﷺ was commanded to deliver was indeed a revelation from his Lord, not wrought from his own desires.
4. The matter which was being revealed was so important that not delivering it was equivalent to not delivering the **entirety** of the Prophetic Message.
5. There was a palpable fear that the Prophet ﷺ possessed regarding this Message that he was commanded to deliver. This fear was not in relation to any one group in particular; rather his fear was in relation to the entire society. He was

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وما ذلك الاحتفاف الخاص بآيتي أهل الكتاب إلا لأنهم هم الذين كانوا يأملون ختام هذه الرسالة بختام حياة الرسول ويعملون لإنهائها بحيل كتابية أكثر مما يحتاله المشركون

"The encompassment of this verse by two verses regarding the *Ahl al-Kitāb* is for no other reason except the following: They were the ones who were longing for the end of this Message at the end of the Prophet's life. Therefore, they tried to assassinate him with all sorts of stratagems, even more so than the polytheists themselves."

not afraid for a personal reason, rather he was afraid that the Message would be completely disintegrated upon his delivery of the Command of Allah ﷻ.

6. There are individuals who will try to cover up this Message and harm the Prophet ﷺ, but Allah ﷻ will safeguard its delivery and will not allow their subversions to succeed.
7. It is very likely - based on the context - that this Message had to do with *wilāyah* (in all the meanings of love, assistance, and authority), as the entire passage preceding it pertains to **exactly** this same theme.

In the next section, we shall examine the various possible *maṣādīq* (true representations) proposed for the *sabab al-nuzūl* (reason of revelation) for the Verse of *Tablīgh* and compare them to the above *mafhūm* (conceptions).

3

Establishing the True Representation (*Miṣdāq*)

Introductory Remarks[47]

As we discussed earlier, there are generally two ways of arriving at the intended meaning of the Verse of *Tablīgh*: the first relies on the conceptual representation framework *(al-mafhūm* and *al-miṣdāq)* that we are presenting here. We have already examined the contextual indicators in the previous section in great depth to derive a *mafhūm*. Now, we will aim to expand the analysis further by examining the proposed *maṣādīq* for the circumstance of revelation and their degree of compatibility with what we have derived from the contextual analysis.

The second method is to utilize the Prophetic *Sunnah* through referencing the narrations about this verse from both Shī'ah and Sunnī sources (i.e., the traditions narrated from the *Ahl al-Bayt* and the companions). We will certainly aim to present this approach in Part 2 of this analysis, as the evidence is extremely robust and serves to confirm what we shall demonstrate here.

We have elected to begin our analysis with the first methodology because its starting point is the Qurān, rather than the narrations themselves. This is because the second methodology is predicated upon several introductory beliefs concerning whether the narrators of the said traditions are reliable or not, whether their sources are accurate, and whether the import is

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[47] The following points are derived from an excellent discussion by the esteemed Shaykh Muḥammad al-Obaydān which was delivered in Arabic regarding this verse. Readers may find the article here: https://www.alobaidan.org/archives/5789

clear. Hence, we have adopted the approach of establishing the premises based on the first methodology, then strengthening it via the traditions *(riwāyāt)* only after that.

The Proposed Circumstances for Revelation (*Asbāb al-Nuzūl*)

We will endeavour to study this verse in light of the proposed circumstances for revelation, examining whether they truly fit the *mafhūm* we established in the previous section. One of the most meticulous expositions regarding the possible circumstances that precipitated this verse's revelation comes from the Ash'arī Sunnī exegete, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. In his commentary of the Qurān, he elaborates ten possible reasons for what the phrase *mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika* - what was revealed to you from your Lord - in the verse could mean; and these have been listed below:[48]

- The verse was revealed regarding the issues of stoning *(al-rajm)* and corporeal retribution *(al-qiṣāṣ)*.
- The verse was revealed in criticism of the Jews for mocking religion; the Prophet ﷺ had been silent about this for a while, and therefore this verse was revealed that he should proclaim it openly, without any fear.
- This verse was revealed after the Verse of *Takhyīr* regarding the wives of the Prophet ﷺ.[49] He felt hesitant to proclaim this verse to his wives, as he was afraid they would elect this world and he would have to divorce them as a result of that. Thereafter, this verse was revealed.
- This verse was revealed about Zayd ibn Ḥārithah (the adopted son of the Prophet ﷺ) who was married to Zaynab

[48] *Tafsīr al-Kabīr li al-Rāzī*, Vol 6, Pp. 52-53.

[49] This is verse 28 of Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33), which says: "O Prophet! Say to your wives that: 'If you desire this worldly life and its glitter, then come I will provide (it) for you and release you (from wedlock) beautifully.'"

bint Jaḥsh (the cousin of the Prophet ﷺ). As we discussed before, there was a pre-Islamic Arab taboo that after one's adopted son divorced his wife, the adopted father could not remarry her. Therefore, the Prophet ﷺ was afraid of violating this convention when Allah ﷻ commanded him to do so.

- This verse was revealed about *jihād* (fighting in the battlefield) because the hypocrites despised it; thus, as a result the Prophet ﷺ would sometimes abstain from encouraging them towards it.
- This verse was revealed in reference to criticizing the polytheistic practices of the pre-Islamic Arabs. It is assumed that after Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), verse 108 was revealed,[50] the Prophet ﷺ adopted silence in criticizing their gods. However, this verse was then revealed stating: "convey what was revealed to you from your Lord" regarding their deficiencies. Do not fear them for Allah ﷻ will protect you from them.
- It was revealed regarding the rights of the Muslims upon the Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, in the Farewell Pilgrimage, upon clarifying the Islamic ordinances and rituals, the Prophet ﷺ asked them: "Have I not delivered it?" The Muslims replied: "Yes." Then the Prophet ﷺ responded: "O Allah, bear witness."
- It has been narrated that the Prophet ﷺ settled under a tree during one of his travels and hung his sword around it. A Bedouin came to him while he was reclining, seized his sword, and then drew it saying: "O Muḥammad, now who will guard you from me?" The Prophet ﷺ retorted: "Allah." The hand of the Bedouin then began to tremble, and the

[50] This verse is as follows: "And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge..."

sword fell out of his hand. His head suddenly began pounding against the trunk of the tree until he passed away. Then Allah ﷻ revealed this verse and made it clear that He will protect His Prophet ﷺ from the people.

- The Prophet ﷺ had been frightened by the Quraysh, the Jews, and the Christians, so Allah ﷻ relinquished that fear from his heart with the revelation of this verse.
- It was revealed in the merit of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib ؓ, and when it was revealed, the Prophet ﷺ clasped his hand and said: "Whoever I am their master, then let ʿAlī also be their master. O Allah! Become a friend of the one who befriends him and become an enemy of the one who hates him." Thereafter, ʿUmar came to him and said: "Congratulations to you, for you have become my master and the master of every male and female believer."

Clearly, when we study each of these reasons, we find that most of them do **not** conform to the language of the honourable verse and the style of its address. The apparent meaning of the verse suggests a charge to convey a certain affair that equals the entire Prophetic Message in importance, and not doing so is tantamount to not relaying the Message at all. We will address this view in detail in Contention #1 later. But suffice it to say that proposing that the verse simply means: "Reveal the entirety of the revelation, since if you do not do so, then you have not revealed His Message" is not a genuine interpretation. What was the remainder of the revelation that the Prophet ﷺ was reluctant to deliver such that he was threatened like this?[51]

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[51] Fakhr al-Rāzī proposes in his *tafsīr* that the verse means: "Deliver the entire religion, for if you do not do so, then you have not delivered the entire religion." This interpretation of course contains redundancy that is certainly unbecoming of a Divine Scripture. Then, al-Rāzī makes an analogy with an Arabic line of poetry which states: "I am Abū Najm, and my poetry is my poetry." However, it is clear in this line that this is not

Additionally, many of the issues that Fakhr al-Rāzī has mentioned have already been addressed in other places in the Noble Qurān, such as the case of Zayd and Zaynab, *jihād*, or corporeal retribution. Therefore, it seems strange that these issues would present themselves again at the end of the Prophet's life.

Yet another issue is that several reasons seem to partition the verse and do not address it in totality. For instance, believing that a Bedouin Arab precipitated the revelation of "Allah will protect you from the people" is proposed; however, what is the Message then that the Prophet ﷺ is being commanded to deliver?

Furthermore, nearly all these interpretations contradict the personal integrity of the Prophet ﷺ in implying that he was personally fearful of the Quraysh, his wives, the Jews, and/or the Christians. They contradict what history tells us about the many stances when he adopted a stance against the infidels of Makkah, such as when they came to negotiate with him to cease his proselytization. In response, the Prophet ﷺ told his uncle: "O my uncle! By Allah, if they were to put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left in exchange for leaving this affair, I would not do so and would rather perish in its pursuit." This is of course but one of the many positions he took since the beginning of his Prophethood which illustrate his self-sacrifice and willingness to erect the Islamic Message, regardless of any personal losses or harm to himself.

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an appropriate proof here because the Divine revelation is not like poetry whose origin can be questioned. In other words, Abū Najm's import is that his poetry is unlike any other and is clearly identifiable, while this is a given fact already for the Divine revelation such that it would not require this type of a statement.

The Personal Choice of Fakhr al-Rāzī

After presenting these myriad reasons for the revelation of the verse, Fakhr al-Rāzī then elects a ninth reason: that is, to reassure the Prophet ﷺ from fearing the deception of the Jews and the Quraysh, and to remove the apprehension for them from his heart.

In electing this reason, he cites the exigency of maintaining consistency in the context. The verse is included within an address to the People of the Book, and therefore it appears that the reason for revelation should follow this import.[52]

A Critical Analysis of Fakhr al-Rāzī's Selection

This argument from Fakhr al-Rāzī is not acceptable because in the first place, there is no evidence that these verses were uttered altogether during a single historical circumstance. As such, a contextual harmony is not necessarily required (even though we have sought to establish one in our discussion of the *mafhūm* earlier), especially when we consider that the Qurānic verses were not organized according to chronology.[53]

Secondly, as we discussed previously this verse was revealed during the end of the Prophet's life, during his Farewell Pilgrimage. At this time, the Jews and Christians would not have specifically been a cause of fear for the Prophet ﷺ; most of them had surrendered and were giving *jizyah* (martial tax), even though they continued to bear secret enmity for the new religion. Nonetheless,

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[52] As we demonstrated in our discussion regarding the *mafhūm*, the contextual analysis of Fakhr al-Rāzī is patently incomplete, and this has resulted in his erroneous deduction.

[53] Although some believe that the verses of the Qurān were arranged by the companions, it is the thesis of these writers that the arrangement of its verses was per Divine commandment. *Wallahu A'lam* (And Allah is All-Knowing).

during this stage there was no clear reason why the Prophet ﷺ should directly fear the *Ahl al-Kitāb*.[54]

Allah ﷻ had already dismantled their locus of power, and therefore the further Divine promise of protection mentioned in this verse becomes superfluous. In other words, there was no reason for the Prophet ﷺ to hold off from delivering Allah's revelation until receiving a guarantee of Divine protection from the *Ahl al-Kitāb*. This is a strong indicator that the view that Fakhr al-Rāzī has proposed cannot be correct.

Finally, it is established that at the beginning of the Prophetic mission, the final Messenger ﷺ had propagated religious messages graver still, and to people even more aggressive and persecutory than the *Ahl al-Kitāb*. Therefore, since this is a latter verse, it seems very disproportionate for the nature of the Prophetic delivery being proposed.

The Selected *Miṣdāq* for the Circumstance of Revelation

Since none of the first nine reasons for revelation are substantive, it follows by a process of elimination that the reason for its revelation must be the tenth reason that al-Rāzī has mentioned in his work. This possibility is the only one which confirms with the *mafhūm* (understanding) that we previously discussed; and it does not contradict the sublime integrity of the Prophet ﷺ, and it appears very plausible that the delivery of such a Message of this magnitude could threaten the Muḥammadan mission. The Islamic society was prone to rejecting this proclamation categorically because they would assume that the Prophet ﷺ was demonstrating nepotism in favour of his son-in-law and cousin. Hence, the

[54] As we discussed in the contextual discussion, the Prophet's fear was of the hypocrites who were inclined to the Jews and the Christians, not of the Christians and Jews directly.

Prophet ﷺ would easily have feared delivering such a Message, not for his own life, but rather on account of the Muslim nation and its fate.

Let us examine the *mafhūm* that we derived earlier point-by-point so that we may confirm this:

1. This verse was revealed in the late Medinite period.

This is congruent with the declaration of Imām ʿAlī's ﷺ *Wilāyah* at Ghadīr which occurred during the period of the Farewell Pilgrimage on the 18th of Dhūl Ḥijjah in the year 10 AH.

2. This verse would increase the *Ahl al-Kitāb* in their transgression and disbelief.

Of course, given that the Jews and Christians had already surrendered by this time, one may question how this would increase their transgression. As we proposed earlier, the Event of Ghadīr is a beautiful *miṣdāq* for this, since appointing a successor ensures the continued integrity of the Islamic Message even after the Prophet's departure. Therefore, it entirely makes sense that those who disbelieve among the *Ahl al-Kitāb* would redouble their efforts after this proclamation.

3. The Message that the Prophet ﷺ was told to deliver was indeed a revelation from his Lord, not wrought of his own desire.

The declaration of Imām ʿAlī's ﷺ *Wilāyah* was not based on the Prophet's own whim, and he made this abundantly clear during many instances. For instance, after Ghadīr, it is narrated that a man by the name of Nuʿmān ibn Ḥārith al-Fihrī asked the Prophet ﷺ whether this declaration was truly from Allah ﷻ or from him. When the Prophet ﷺ affirmed that it was Divine, he exclaimed: "We have borne witness to everything you said about Allah, His Messengers, the prayers, fasting, and pilgrimage. But you were not satisfied until you also favoured your cousin over us!" He then supplicated to Allah ﷻ that he should be struck with a Divine

meteor if what the Prophet ﷺ said was the truth, whereupon it descended, and he died instantly.[55]

Another such example was after the revelation of Sūrah al-Tawbah, after which the Prophet ﷺ sent Imām ʿAlī ؑ to deliver the chapter to the Quraysh. It is widely reported that the Messenger ﷺ stated regarding this: "I have been commanded that no one should deliver it except me or a man from me/my *Ahl al-Bayt*."[56]

4. The matter was so crucial that not doing so was equivalent to not delivering the entirety of the Prophetic Message.

The Prophet ﷺ had already informed the Muslim nation about his impending departure, and therefore it follows that appointing a successor was a vital issue that could not to be overlooked no matter what. Without doing so, the Prophetic Message would have been in grave danger, especially given that there were elements who were waiting for the demise of the Noble Prophet ﷺ in order to reclaim hegemony. In other words, the preservation of the Prophetic Message was contingent upon electing a successor.

There are some who may posit that this was not the case, since Imām ʿAlī ؑ was not made the caliph directly after the Prophet ﷺ anyway, and the religion still survived. However, they neglect the fact that the providence of ʿAlī ؑ was always respected, even though the Muslim nation refused to concede his political leadership.[57]

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[55] This is discussed in Sunnī *tafāsīr* also such as by Al-Qurṭubī. There is a related discussion about this being the occasion of revelation for Sūrah al-Maʿārij (70), verse 1. We have deliberately abstained from a detailed analysis of that event in this piece given it is a separate discussion heavily dependent on narrations *(riwāyāt)*.

[56] This is widely narrated and has been quoted by various Sunnī *muḥaddithīn* (narrators of *ḥadīth)* including ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, Al-Haythamī, and Ibn Abī ʿĀsim.

[57] There are well-recorded statements from ʿUmar acknowledging ʿAlī's ؑ superiority in religious knowledge. Consider the statement recorded

As we will discuss further in our contentions section, this compartmentalization of authority was wholly unacceptable.

5. There was a palpable fear that the Prophet ﷺ possessed about delivering this proclamation. It was not for his own safety, but rather due to fear that the religion would collapse.

This issue was indeed quite grave, as the hypocrites and *Ahl al-Kitāb* could easily seize upon this to accuse the Prophet ﷺ of personal interest. Appointing one's cousin-brother and son-in-law over the Muslims would apparently appear to be of self-interest, and there was reason and justification why the Prophet ﷺ felt trepidation about it. Many people believed that the Prophet ﷺ was simply an ordinary man, a king, or a poet who would soon relent to the vicissitudes of time.[58] Appointing a successor from the Prophet's family would resemble tribal norms and dynastic customs, thus precipitating accusations that could cause believers to doubt.

6. Allah ﷻ would protect the Prophet ﷺ and His own Message, despite those individuals who wanted to cover up this proclamation.

This is substantiated by the fact that the Event of Ghadīr is one of the highly attested and most confirmed events in the entire Prophetic *Sīrah*. It has been immaculately preserved by over one hundred eyewitnesses, such that doubting its occurrence is not

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from Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in his book, *Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah*: "On the authority of Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab:

كان عمر يتعوذ ب الله من معضلة ليس لها أبو حسن يعني علي بن أبي طالب

'Umar would seek refuge in Allah from facing a dilemma where Abūl Ḥasan, meaning 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, was not present."

[58] Consider the verse of the Qurān: "Or do they say: 'He is a poet for whom we eagerly await an ill-fate?'" (Sūrah al-Ṭūr (52), verse 30)

possible. The efforts of those who try to cover it up have been thoroughly unsuccessful.[59]

Islam survived despite making this appointment clear to the public. Secondly, the Prophet ﷺ was entirely protected in making this declaration, and not the least bit of harm befell him.

7. This Message has to do with *Wilāyah* given the context of the preceding passage.

Indeed, it most certainly does: a *Wilāyah* that surpasses all the meanings of love, assistance, alliance, and most importantly, authority. This was a Divinely-vested authority, not one wrought through political election or representation. While the previous allusions to Imām 'Alī's ﷺ authority had been somewhat implicit, this one was as clear as could be. Yet there are still some people who doubt about this![60]

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[59] It is for this reason that you will find them instead questioning the meaning of *"al-mawlā,"* and resorting to various other stratagems to undermine the meaning of political and religious successorship. Of course, given that Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 67 is related to the Event of Ghadīr, this thoroughly refutes any possible doubt regarding its signification.

[60] For further discussion, refer to *Tafsīr al-Mizān* by 'Allāmah Ṭabā'ṭabā'ī, Vol.6, Pg.42; and *Tafsīr al-Amthāl* by Āyatullāh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī, Vol.4, Pg.77.

4

Discussion from the Narrations (*Riwāyāt*)

After having engaged in the extensive discussion above to derive the proper *miṣdāq* (particular representation), we now aim to strengthen our thesis via resorting to the narrations *(riwāyāt)*. We aim to demonstrate that both Shī'ah and Sunnī books have a multitude of narrations about this, such that it is hard to propose any other possible interpretation. The famous scholar, 'Allāmah al-Amīnī, puts it best when he states about the alternative opinions regarding the circumstance of revelation for this verse:

> هي لاتعدو أن تكون تفسيراً بالرأي؛ أو استحساناً من غير حجّة؛ أو تكثيراً للُغد أمام حديث الولاية، فتّاً في عضدها، وتخذيلاً عن تصديقها، وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلاَّ أَنْ يُتِمَّ نُورَهُ

> "They do not exceed being mere interpretations by opinion *(al-tafsīr bi al-ra'y)*, or fanciful reasonings without any proof *(istiḥsān bi ghayr ḥujjah)*, or superfluous obfuscation in front of the *Ḥadīth of Ghadīr* - mere vain attempts to weaken it and evade its truth. And Allah rejects except to perfect His Light!"[61]

Therefore, we will first aim to discuss the narrations from the Shī'ah books which are unanimous about this verse having been revealed about the Event of *Ghadīr*. Then, we will endeavour to examine the narrations from the Sunnī books about this topic and provide some critical commentary about the alternative narrations.

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[61] See 'Allāmah al-Amīnī's book, *Al-Ghadīr*, Vol. 1, Pg. 226.

The Shīʿah Narrations (*Riwāyāt*)

This is nearly universally accepted among the Shīʿah scholars; thus, we will suffice with quoting some narrations here, although it is possible to extract many more:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: فَلَمَّا رَجَعَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ مِنْ حَجَّةِ الْوَدَاعِ نَزَلَ عَلَيْهِ جَبْرَئِيلُ ﷺ فَقَالَ: (يا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ ما أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ ربك...) فَنَادَى النَّاسَ فَاجْتَمَعُوا وَأَمَرَ بِسَمُرَاتٍ فَقُمَّ شَوْكُهُنَّ ثُمَّ قَالَ ﷺ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ مَنْ وَلِيُّكُمْ وَ أَوْلَى بِكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَقَالُوا اللَّهُ وَ رَسُولُهُ فَقَالَ مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاهُ فَعَلِي مَوْلَاهُ اللَّهُمَّ وَالِ مَنْ وَالَاهُ وَ عَادِ مَنْ عَادَاهُ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ فَوَقَعَتْ حَسَكَةُ النِّفَاقِ فِي قُلُوبِ الْقَوْمِ- وَ قَالُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ جَلَّ ذِكْرُهُ هَذَا عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ قَطُّ وَ مَا يُرِيدُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَرْفَعَ بِضَبْعِ ابْنِ عَمِّهِ

"On the authority of Abū ʿAbdillāh (the 6th Imām) ﷺ who said: 'When the Prophet ﷺ returned from the Farewell Pilgrimage, Jibrāʾīl ﷺ descended upon him and said: *'O Messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to you from your Lord...'* Thereupon, he called the people, and they gathered around him; he ordered that the acacia trees be removed of their thorns (to make room). Then he said: 'O people! Who is your master and more worthy of you than yourselves?' They replied: 'Allah and His Messenger.' Then he continued: 'He whose master I am, then ʿAlī is their master. O Allah befriend the one who befriends him, and oppose the one who opposes him.' He repeated this three times. Then, the spines of hypocrisy entered the hearts of the people and they said: 'Allah, the Almighty, has not revealed anything to Muḥammad and he only wants to raise up the arm of his cousin.'"[62]

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[62] *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, Vol. 1, *Kitāb al-Ḥujjah*, *Bab al-Naṣṣ ʿalā Amīr al-Muʾminīn*, Ḥadīth 3.

عَنْ أَبِی جَعْفَرٍ ﷺ قَالَ أَمَرَ اللّٰهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ رَسُولَهُ بِوَلَايَةِ عَلِی وَ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِ- «إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللّٰهُ وَ رَسُولُهُ وَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا....» وَ فَرَضَ وَلَايَةَ أُولِی الْأَمْرِ فَلَمْ يَدْرُوا مَا هِی فَأَمَرَ اللّٰهُ مُحَمَّداً ﷺ أَنْ يُفَسِّرَ لَهُمُ الْوَلَايَةَ كَمَا فَسَّرَ لَهُمُ الصَّلَاةَ وَ الزَّكَاةَ وَ الصَّوْمَ وَ الْحَجَّ فَلَمَّا أَتَاهُ ذَلِكَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ ضَاقَ بِذَلِكَ صَدْرُ رَسُولِ اللّٰهِ ﷺ وَ تَخَوَّفَ أَنْ يَرْتَدُّوا عَنْ دِينِهِمْ وَ أَنْ يُكَذِّبُوهُ فَضَاقَ صَدْرُهُ وَ رَاجَعَ رَبَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ فَأَوْحَى اللّٰهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ إِلَيْهِ- يا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ ما أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَ إِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَما بَلَّغْتَ رِسالَتَهُ وَ اللّٰهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النّاسِ فَصَدَعَ بِأَمْرِ اللّٰهِ تَعَالَى ذِكْرُهُ فَقَامَ بِوَلَايَةِ عَلِی ﷺ يَوْمَ غَدِيرِ خُمٍّ فَنَادَى الصَّلَاةَ جَامِعَةً وَ أَمَرَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُبَلِّغَ الشَّاهِدُ الْغَائِبَ

"On the authority of Abū Ja'far (the 5th Imām) ﷺ who said: 'Allah, the Grand and Majestic, commanded His Messenger towards the *Wilāyah* of 'Alī and revealed to him: *'Your Walī is only Allah, His Messenger, and those who believe...''* He then made the *Wilāyah* of those vested with authority mandatory, however, they did not know, nor understand what that was. Therefore, Allah ordered Muḥammad ﷺ to explain *Wilāyah* the way he had explained *ṣalāt, zakāt, ṣawm,* and *ḥajj*; then when this prescription came, the Prophet's chest straitened, and he became scared that the people would abandon their religion and belie him. Therefore, his chest tightened, and he turned back to his Lord; upon this, Allah inspired to him the verse: *'O Messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to you from your Lord and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His Message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.'* Thereafter, the Prophet executed the command of Allah, the All-High, and stood up with the message of 'Alī's *Wilāyah* at Ghadīr Khumm. He then convened the congregational

prayer, and instructed the people who were present to convey the message to those who were absent."[63]

عن ابن عباس و جابر بن عبد الله قالا أمر الله تعالى نبيه محمدا ﷺ أن ينصب عليا ﷺ علما للناس ليخبرهم بولايته، فتخوف رسول الله ﷺ أن يقولوا: حابى ابن عمه- و أن تطغوا في ذلك عليه فأوحى الله إليه يا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ ما أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ- وَ إِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَما بَلَّغْتَ رِسالَتَهُ- وَ اللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ

"On the authority of Ibn 'Abbās and Jābir ibn 'Abdillāh who said: 'Allah, the All-High, commanded His Prophet, Muḥammad ﷺ, to appoint 'Alī ﷺ as a luminary for the people to inform them about his *Wilāyah*. Then the Prophet ﷺ got worried that they would say: 'He is showing favouritism for his cousin' and that they would rebel against him. But then Allah revealed: *'O Messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to you from your Lord and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His Message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.'*"[64]

عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَرْقَمَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: لَمَّا نَزَلَتْ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ فِي وَلَايَةِ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ ﷺ يا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ ما أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ قَالَ فَأَخَذَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَدَ عَلِيٍّ ثُمَّ رَفَعَهَا وَ قَالَ اللَّهُمَّ مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاهُ فَهَذَا عَلِيٌّ مَوْلَاهُ اللَّهُمَّ وَالِ مَنْ وَالَاهُ وَ عَادِ مَنْ عَادَاهُ

"On the authority of Zayd ibn Arqam (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: 'When this verse was revealed regarding the *wilāyah* of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ: *'O Messenger,*

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[63] *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, Vol. 1, *Kitāb al-Ḥujjah, Bab mā Naṣṣa Allahu 'alā al-A'immah*, Ḥadīth 4.

[64] This is simply one *ḥadīth* from *Tafsīr al-'Ayyāshī*, Vol. 1, Pg. 332; you will find that there are in fact four other narrations in this chapter about this verse narrated from Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ, Imām al-Ṣādiq ﷺ, Jābir ibn 'Abdillāh al-Anṣārī, and Ibn 'Abbās.

deliver that which has been revealed to you from your Lord and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His Message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people,' the Prophet took the hand of 'Alī and raised it, then said: 'By Allah, for whomsoever I am their master, 'Alī is their master; O Allah, befriend the one who befriends him, and oppose the one who opposes him.'"[65]

قال أبو عبد الله جعفر الصادق عليه السلام: لم يمض بعد كمال الدين وتمام النعمة ورضى الرب إلا أنزل الله تبارك وتعالى على نبيه صلى الله عليه وآله بكراع الغميم: يا أيها الرسول بلغ ما أنزل إليك من ربك علي - وإن لم تفعل فما بلغت رسالته والله يعصمك من الناس فذكر قيام رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله بالولاية بغدير خم قال: ونزل جبرئيل عليه السلام بقول الله عز وجل: اليوم أكملت لكم دينكم وأتممت عليكم نعمتي ورضيت لكم الإسلام دينا. بعلي أمير المؤمنين في هذا اليوم أكمل لكم معاشر المهاجرين والأنصار دينكم وأتم عليكم نعمته ورضي لكم الإسلام دينا. فاسمعوا له وأطيعوا تفوزوا وتغنمو

"On the authority of Abū 'Abdillāh, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq ﷺ who said: 'The completion of religion, perfection of the favours, and Divine pleasure did not actualize until when Allah, Blessed and All-High, revealed to His Prophet ﷺ at the Valley of Karā' al-Ghamīm: *'O Messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to you from your Lord and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His Message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving folk.'* Then the Imām mentioned the station of the Messenger ﷺ in announcing the *Wilāyah* at Ghadīr Khumm and said: 'Angel Jibrā'īl ﷺ descended then with the words of Allah, the Grand and Majestic: *'Today I have perfected your religion and completed my favour upon you,*

[65] *Tafsīr Furāt al-Kūfī,* Vol. 1, Pg. 130; there are three other narrations quoted there from Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ, Imām al-Ṣādiq ﷺ, and Ibn 'Abbās.

> *and I am pleased with Islam as your religion.'* On this day, by ʿAlī—the Commander of the Faithful—O *Muhājirūn* and *Anṣar*, Allah has completed your religion, completed His favours upon you, and is pleased with Islam as your religion. Therefore, listen to him and obey him, then you will be successful and prosperous.'"[66]

Suffice it is to say that within the Shīʿah *Ḥadīth* corpus, the question of the circumstances surrounding the revelation of the Verse of *Tablīgh* is unanimous: the appointment of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ as the Successor of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ at Ghadīr Khumm.

The Sunni Narrations (*Riwāyāt*)

The narrations to this effect in Sunnī books are immense, and include narrations from Al-Barrā' ibn ʿĀzib, Jabir ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Anṣārī, ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd, Ibn ʿAbbās, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Bāqir ﷺ, Saʿīd al-Khudrī, Zayd ibn Arqam, Abu Hurayrah, etc.

Below, we will mention the names of some of the top Sunnī scholars who have mentioned in their books how this verse is related to the Event of Ghadīr. However, given the limited space, we will avoid quoting every *ḥadīth* in depth, but anyone with this expertise may consult the relevant sources:[67]

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[66] Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs, *Kitāb al-Yaqīn*, Pg. 212.

[67] This list is derived from an excellent book entitled, *Jawāb Mas'alah fī Sha'n ʿĀyah al-Tablīgh*, by Shaykh Asadullāh ibn Muḥammad al-Kāẓimī, critically edited by Maytham al-Khaṭīb. This work was generously shared with me by Sayyid Muḥsin al-Kashmīrī. We also recommend checking out the encyclopedic, *Al-Ghadīr*, by ʿAllāmah al-Amīnī, where he mentions numerous other Sunnī scholars and their chains. One can access this resource here in English: https://www.al-islam.org/ghadir/contextfb58.html?context=balligh or refer to the original Arabic work.

1. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 327 AH).[68]
2. Abū Bakr ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shīrāzī (d. 411 AH).[69]
3. Aḥmad ibn Mūsā ibn Mardawayh al-Iṣfahānī (d. 410 AH).[70]
4. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Tha'labī al-Nīsābūrī (d. 427 AH).[71]
5. Abū Naʿīm Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdullāh al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430 AH).[72]
6. ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad al-Wāḥidī al-Nīsābūrī (d. 468 AH).[73]
7. Abū Saʿīd Masʿūd ibn Nāṣir al-Sijistānī (d. 477 AH).[74]
8. ʿAbdullah ibn ʿUbaydillāh al-Ḥaskānī al-Ḥanafī (d. 480 AH).[75]
9. Abū al-Qāsim ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571 AH).[76]
10. Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Rāzī (d. 606 AH).[77]
11. Abū Sālim Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ṭalḥah al-Shāfi'ī (d. 652 AH).[78]
12. 'Izz al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ras'anī al-Ḥanbalī (d. 661 AH).[79]
13. ʿAllāmah Niẓām al-Dīn al-Ḥasan al-Qummī al-Nīsābūrī (d. 728 AH).[80]

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[68] *Tafsīr al-Qurān al-Karīm*, Vol. 4, Pg. 1172, Ḥadīth 6609.

[69] *Mā Nazala min al-Qurān fī Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, derived from *Khulāṣah ʿAbaqāt al-Anwār*, Vol. 8, Pg. 211.

[70] *Manāqib ibn Mardawayh*, Pg. 239, Ḥadīth 345.

[71] *Tafsīr al-Tha'labī*, Vol. 4, Pg. 92.

[72] *Maʿrifah al-Ṣaḥābah*, Vol. 4, Pg. 468, Ḥadīth 6820.

[73] *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*, Pg. 135.

[74] *Kitāb al-Dirāyah*, as extracted from *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 37, Pg. 130.

[75] *Shawāhid al-Tanzīl*, Vol. 1, Pg. 250, Ḥadīth 245.

[76] *Tārīkh Madīnah Dimishq*, Vol. 42, Pg. 237.

[77] *Tafsīr Fakhr al-Rāzī*, Vol, 12, Pp. 49-50.

[78] *Maṭālib al-Sa'ūl fī Manāqib Āl al-Rasūl*, Pp. 95-97.

[79] *Tafsīr al-Ras'anī*, derived from *Khulāṣah ʿAbaqāt al-Anwār*, Vol. 8, Pg. 238.

[80] *Tafsīr Gharā'ib al-Qurān wa Raghā'ib al-Furqān*, Vol. 2, Pg. 616.

14. Al-Sayyid ʿAlī ibn Shihāb al-Dīn al-Hamadānī al-Shāfiʿī (d. 786 AH).[81]
15. ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Mālikī ibn al-Ṣabbāgh (d. 855 AH).[82]
16. Al-Qāḍī Maḥmūd ibn Aḥmad al-ʿAynī al-Ḥanafī (d. 855 AH).[83]
17. Abū al-Faḍl Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī al-Shāfiʿī (d. 911 AH).[84]
18. Jamāl al-Dīn ʿAṭāʾ Allah ibn Faḍlillāh al-Shīrāzī (d. 930 AH).[85]
19. Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852 AH).[86]
20. Al-Mīrzā Muḥammad ibn Muʿtamad Khān al-Ḥārithī (d. 1126 AH).[87]

Just for the sake of demonstrating some of these *aḥādīth*, we will list ten of them here with their translations. Although the full chains of narrators are included in the Arabic, we have abridged them in the English translations to conserve space:

حدثنا عثمان بن حرزاد حدثنا إسماعيل بن زكريا حدثنا علي بن عباس عن الأعمش عن أبي الجحاف عن عطية العوفي عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال: نزلت هذه الأية يا أيها الرسول بلغ ما أنزل إليك من ربك في علي بن أبي طالب

"...on the authority of Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī: 'This verse '*O Messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to you from your Lord and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His Message. And Allah will protect you from the people.*

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[81] *Mawaddah al-Qurbā* printed in *Yanābīʾ al-Mawaddah li Dhawī al-Qurbā*, Vol. 2, Pp. 284-285, Ḥadīth 812.

[82] *Al-Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah fī Maʾrifat al-Aʾimmah*, Vol. 1, Pg. 245.

[83] *ʿUmdah al-Qārī*, Vol. 18, Pg. 206.

[84] *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, Vol. 2, Pg. 298.

[85] *Al-Arbaʿīn fī Faḍāʾil al-Imām Amīr al-Muʾminīn*, Pp. 45-47, Ḥadīth 13.

[86] *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, Vol. 7, Pg. 61.

[87] *Nuzul al-Abrār bi mā Ṣaḥḥa min Manāqib Ahl al-Bayt al-Aṭhār*, Pp. 52-54.

Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people' was revealed about 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.'"[88]

أخبرنا الحاكم أبو عبد الله الحافظ جملة، قال: أخبرنا علي بن عبد الرحمان بن عيسى الدهقان بالكوفة، قال: حدثنا الحسين بن الحكم الحبري قال: حدثنا الحسن بن الحسين العرني قال: حدثنا حبان بن علي العنزي قال: حدثنا الكلبي عن أبي صالح: عن ابن عباس في قوله عز وجل: (يا أيها الرسول بلغ ما أنزل إليك من ربك) الآية، قال: نزلت في علي، أمر رسول الله (صلى الله عليه) أن يبلغ فيه، فأخذ رسول الله بيد علي فقال: من كنت مولاه فعلي مولاه اللهم وال من والاه وعاد من عاداه.

"...on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās regarding the words of the Almighty, Grand and Majestic: *'O Messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to you from your Lord and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His Message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people,'* he said: 'It was revealed about 'Alī; the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was commanded to deliver (the Message) regarding him, so the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took the hand of 'Alī and said: 'For whomsoever I am the master, 'Alī is their master; O Allah, befriend the one who befriends him, and oppose the one who opposes him.'"[89]

أخبرنا: أبو سعيد محمد بن علي الصفار، قال: أخبرنا: الحسن بن أحمد المخلدي، قال: أخبرنا: محمد بن حمدون بن خالد، قال: حدثنا: محمد بن ابراهيم الخلوتي، قال: حدثنا: الحسن ابن حماد سجادة، قال: حدثنا: علي بن عابس، عن الأعمش وأبي حجاب، عن عطية، عن أبي سعيد الخدري، قال: نزلت هذه الآية: {يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ} يوم غدير خم في علي بن أبي طالب

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[88] Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Qurān al-Karīm*, Vol. 4, Pg. 1172, Ḥadīth 6609.

[89] Al-Ḥaskānī, *Shawāhid al-Tanzīl*, Vol. 1, Pg. 251.

"...on the authority of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī who said: 'This verse: '*O Messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to you from your Lord*' was revealed on the Day of Ghadīr Khumm regarding 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.'"[90]

أخبرنا: السيد أبو الحسن محمد بن علي بن الحسين الحسني رحمه الله قراءة، قال: أخبرنا: أبو الحسن محمد بن محمد بن علي الأنصاري بطوس، قال: حدثنا: قريش بن خداش بن السائب، قال: حدثنا: أبو عصمة نوح بن أبي مريم، عن إسماعيل، عن أبي معشر، عن سعيد المقبري، عن أبي هريرة، عن النبي ﷺ قال: لما أسرى بي إلى السماء سمعت نداء من تحت العرش أن عليا راية الهدى وحبيب من يؤمن بي بلغ يا محمد، قال: فلما نزل النبي ﷺ أسر ذلك، فأنزل الله عز وجل: {يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ} في علي بن أبي طالب: {وَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَالله يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ}

"...on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet ﷺ said: 'When I ascended up to Heaven (during the ascension - *Isrā'*), I heard a call from under the Throne of Allah that: ''Alī is the banner of guidance and the beloved of those who believe in Me' - deliver this O Muḥammad!' He (Abū Hurayrah) continues: 'When the Prophet ﷺ descended, he kept that hidden, but then Allah, Grand and Majestic revealed: '*O Messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to you from your Lord*' regarding 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (and the verse continued): *'And if you do not do so, then you have not delivered His Message; and Allah will protect you from the people.*'"[91]

أخبرنا: أبو بكر وجيه بن طاهر، أنا: أبو حامد الأزهري، أنا: أبو محمد المخلدي، أنا: أبو بكر محمد بن حمدون، نا: محمد بن ابراهيم الحلواني، نا: الحسن بن حماد سجادة، نا: علي بن عابس، عن الأعمش وأبي الجحاف، عن عطية، عن أبي

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[90] Al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*, Vol. 1, Pg. 204.

[91] Al-Ḥaskānī, *Shawāhid al-Tanzīl*, Vol. 1, Pg. 249.

سعيد الخدري، قال: نزلت هذه الآية: {يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ} على رسول الله ﷺ يوم غدير خم في علي بن أبي طالب

"...on the authority of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī who said: 'The verse: *'O Messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to you from your Lord'* was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ on Ghadīr Khumm regarding 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.'"[92]

أخبرنا أبو بكر السكري قال: أخبرنا أبو عمرو المقري قال أخبرنا الحسن بن سفيان، قال: حدثني أحمد بن أزهر قال: حدثنا عبد الرحمان بن عمرو بن جبلة، قال: حدثنا عمر بن نعيم بن عمر بن قيس الماصر، قال: سمعت جدي قال: حدثنا عبد الله بن أبي أوفى قال: سمعت رسول الله ﷺ يقول بيوم غدير خم وتلا هذه الآية: (يا أيها الرسول بلغ ما أنزل إليك من ربك، وإن لم تفعل فما بلغت رسالته) ثم رفع يديه حتى يرى بياض إبطيه ثم قال: ألا من كنت مولاه فعلي مولاه، اللهم وال من والاه وعاد من عاداه. ثم قال: اللهم اشهد

"...on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn Abī Awfā who said: 'I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say on the Day of Ghadīr Khumm reciting this verse: '*O Messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to you from your Lord and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His Message,*' then he raised his hands until the whites of his armpits showed, and he said: 'Whomsoever's master I am, then 'Alī is their master. O Allah, befriend the one who befriends him, and be an enemy to the one who is his enemy.' Then he said: 'O Allah, bear witness!'"[93]

أخبرنا: أبو عبد الله الدينوري قراءة، قال: حدثنا: أحمد بن محمد بن اسحاق بن ابراهيم السني، قال: أخبرني: عبد الرحمن بن حمدان، قال: حدثنا: محمد بن عثمان العبسي، قال: حدثنا: إبراهيم بن محمد بن ميمون، قال: حدثنا: علي بن عابس، عن الأعمش، عن أبي الجحاف داود بن أبي عوف، عن عطية، عن أبي

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[92] Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimishq*, Vol. 42, Pg. 237.

[93] *Shawāhid al-Tanzīl*, Vol. 1, Pg. 252.

سعيد الخدري، قال: نزلت هذه الآية في علي بن أبي طالب: {يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ}

"...on the authority of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī who said: 'This verse was revealed about 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib: '*O Messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to you from your Lord.*'"[94]

دثنا: محمد بن منصور، عن عباد، عن علي بن هاشم، عن أبيه، عن كثير الثوري كذا: عن أبي جعفر أن رسول الله ﷺ أمر أن يقوم بولاية علي فضاق بذلك ذرعا حتى نزلت: {يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ وَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَالله يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ } فأخذ بيد علي، فقال: اللهم وال من والاه، وعاد من عاداه.

"...on the authority of Abū Ja'far that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was ordered to proclaim the *Wilāyah* of 'Alī, but he felt constrained by that until the verse was revealed: '*O Messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to you from your Lord and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His Message. And Allah will protect you from the people.*' Then he took 'Alī's hand and said: 'O Allah, befriend the one who befriends him, and be an enemy to the one who is his enemy.'"[95]

وأخرج ابن مردويه، عن ابن مسعود، قال: كنا نقرأ على عهد رسول الله ﷺ: {يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ} أن عليا مولى المؤمنين {وَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَالله يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ}

"...on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd who said: 'We used to recite during the time of the Prophet ﷺ: *'O Messenger, deliver what was revealed to you from your Lord'* that 'Alī is the master of the believers; (and we would recite) *'And if you do*

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[94] *Shawāhid al-Tanzīl*, Vol. 1, Pg. 250.

[95] Ibid., Pg. 255.

not do so you have not delivered His Message, and Allah will protect you from the people.""[96] & [97]

عن البراء بن عازب في قوله تعالى: {يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ } أي بلغ من فضائل علي، نزلت في غدير خم، فخطب رسول الله ﷺ، قال: من كنت مولاه فهذا علي مولاه، فقال عمر: بخ بخ لك يا علي، أصبحت مولاي ومولى كل مؤمن ومؤمنة

"On the authority of Barrā' ibn 'Āzib regarding Allah's words '*O Messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to you from your Lord*' as in deliver the merits of 'Alī. It was revealed in Ghadīr Khumm so the Prophet ﷺ said: 'For whomsoever I am their master, 'Alī is their master.' Then 'Umar said: 'Bravo, bravo, O 'Alī! You have become my master and the master of every believing man and woman.'"[98]

There are of course many more *aḥādīth* from the books of the Ahl al-Sunnah, but we will suffice with these here. It is therefore indeed quite surprising that Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī states:

واعلم أن الشيعة يزعمون خلافاً للأحاديث المتقدمة أن الآية المذكورة نزلت يوم غدير خم في علي رضي الله عنه ويذكرون في ذلك روايات عديدة مراسيل ومعاضيل أكثرها

"Know that the Shī'ah assert in contrary to the aforementioned *aḥādīth* that the verse in question was revealed in Ghadīr Khumm regarding 'Alī (may Allah be

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[96] *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, Vol. 3, Pg. 117.

[97] Regarding this *ḥadīth*, some have accused it of being a fabrication because it implies that the recitation *(qirā'ah)* of the Qurān of Ibn Mas'ūd had distortion *(al-taḥrīf)* with entire interpolated phrases within verses. However, a careful observer will note that these are scribal commentaries by Ibn Mas'ūd, not textual distortion. For more details, see this Sunnī site which clearly admits this: https://www.islamweb.net/ar/fatwa/55282/

[98] Al-Qandūzī, *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, Vol. 2, Pg. 249.

pleased with him), and they mention a number of narrations *(riwāyāt)* - most of which are *marāsīl*[99] and *maʿāḍīl.*"[100 & 101]

In response, one of our great scholars Shaykh ʿAlī al-Kūrānī al-ʿĀmilī states the following:

تعال أيها الشيخ الألباني، لننظر هل صدقت في حكمك على حديث نزول آية: ﴿ ... وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ ... ﴾، في بيعة الغدير، بأنه باطل منكر، وقلت عن طرقه: (مراسيل ومعاضيل أكثرها) ! فلماذا قلت أكثرها ولم تأت بغير الأكثر الذي استثنيته من الإرسال والإعضال ؟!...وهل رأيت طرق الثعلبي، وأبي نعيم، والواحدي، وأبي سعيد السجستاني، والحسكاني، وبحثت أسانيدهم فوجدت في رواتها من لم تعتمد أنت عليهم ؟! ...أقول: كتبت هذا الموضوع في حياة الشيخ الألباني قبل وفاته بنحو سنتين، وأرسلته له إلى الأردن، مع طرق الحديث من شواهد التنزيل للحاكم الحسكاني، وهي عدة طرق وفيها الصحيح على مبناه، ولم يجبني

"Come on, Shaykh al-Albānī, let us see if you have been honest in your judgement against the *ḥadīth* that shows that the verse *(O Messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His Message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people)* pertains to the allegiance at Ghadīr. You say that it is invalid and ambiguous, calling their chains of narrators "mostly *marāsīl* (disconnected) and *maʿāḍīl* (perplexing)." How come you said "most of them" and did not pay attention to those that you have excluded from being *mursal* and *muʿḍal*?!

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[99] *Marāsīl*: plural of *mursal*. If a narration is from a second generation *(tābiʿī)* and not a direct companion *(ṣaḥābah)*, then the *isnād* (see Page 8 in the introduction for the definition of this word) is *mursal* which means "disconnected," implying that there is a missing person in the chain.

[100] *Maʿāḍīl*: plural of *muʿḍal* . If in a narration, the number of consecutive missing reporters in the *isnād* exceeds one, then the *isnād* is *muʿḍal.*

[101] *Mawsūʿah al-Albānī fī al-ʿAqīdah*, Vol. 8, Pg. 381.

Have you looked at the chains of Al-Thaʿlabī, Abu Naʿīm, al-Wāhidī, Abu Saʿīd al-Sijistānī, and Al-Ḥaskānī? Are these among the narrators upon whom you do not rely?! (Shaykh ʿAlī al-Kūrānī continues) Regarding the above: I wrote this piece during the lifetime of Shaykh al-Albānī about two years before his demise and sent it to Jordan, along with the chains of narrators from *Shawāhid al-Tanzīl* of Al-Ḥākim al-Ḥaskānī (and there were a number of chains, some of which are authentic based on his own criteria), however, he did not respond to me!"[102]

Examining the Alternative *Aḥādīth* on this Topic

There are some other narrations that are mentioned regarding why this verse was revealed, some of which we have already addressed in brief in the discussion about the *miṣdāq* (particular representation) of the Verse of *Tablīgh*. However, we will explain in more detail here regarding the other *aḥādīth*.[103] These narrations are related by Al-Ṭabarī, Al-Suyūṭi, and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in their respective commentaries on the Qurān.

Among the narrations in their books are as follows:

1. On the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās that it was revealed to mean "If you hide any verse revealed to you from your Lord, then you have not delivered His Message."
2. On the authority of Qatādah that it means "Allah will suffice him (meaning the Prophet ﷺ) from the people and protect him in his delivering the Message."

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[102] See Shaykh al-Kūrānī's essay about the Verse of Conveyance *(Āyah al-Tablīgh)* entitled *Āyah al-Tablīgh maʿa Siyāqihā*.

[103] We have translated this discussion in an abridged format as derived from ʿAllāmah al-Amīnī's encyclopedia on *Al-Ghadīr*, Vol. 1, Pg. 223.

3. On the authority of ʿĀ'ishah that the Prophet ﷺ had bodyguards until this verse was revealed, after which the Prophet ﷺ told them to disperse because now Allah ﷻ has told him that He will protect him.
4. On the authority of Ibn Kaʿb al-Qarẓī that it was revealed when a Bedouin Arab approached the Noble Prophet ﷺ while he was sleeping alone under a tree and voiced intentions to kill him with his sword. He asked the Prophet ﷺ: "Who will protect you from me?" and the Prophet ﷺ responded "Allah." Then the weapon fell out of his hand, and he began to strike his head against the tree until he died.
5. On the authority of Ibn Jurayj that the Prophet ﷺ used to fear the Quraysh until this verse was revealed, then he ﷺ said: "Whoever wishes to abandon me, let him do so" and he repeated this three times.
6. On the authority of ʿĀ'ishah that she said: "Whoever claims that the Prophet hid anything from the Book of Allah has fabricated (a lie) against Allah" and then she recited this verse.
7. There are several other odd narrations which state that this verse was revealed in Makkah after which the Prophet ﷺ told Abū Ṭālib that he does not need his protection. There is also a narration that says this verse was revealed at the start of the Prophet's mission and that his uncle ʿAbbās came to his rescue.

In analyzing the above narrations, ʿAllāmah al-Amīnī astutely points out that there is no contradiction between narrations #1, #2, and #6, and the notion that the Verse of *Tablīgh* was revealed regarding Imām ʿAlī's ﷺ appointment at Ghadīr. This is because these *aḥādīth* are simply saying that the Prophet ﷺ generally delivered everything that was revealed to him without specifying the exact circumstance that led to the revelation of this particular verse under discussion. Therefore, they are in the place of

commentary describing the general implication of this verse and are not meant to clarify the circumstance of its revelation.

As for the two *aḥādīth*, #3 and #5, these are only describing in general that the Prophet ﷺ was anxious against his enemies and had guards to protect him; it is very possible that the reason was because he was being commanded to disclose Imām 'Alī's ﷺ *Wilāyah*.

Ḥadīth #4 is not tenable because it only explains the latter half of the verse: "Allah will protect you from the people" and is completely disjointed from the previous sentences: "Deliver what was revealed to you from your Lord" and "If you do not do so, then you have not revealed His Message."

Finally, the last *ḥadīth* regarding the Prophet ﷺ obviating himself of Abū Ṭālib's protection and/or taking assistance from his uncle 'Abbās are untenable, because as we demonstrated earlier, this verse is not from the Makkan period; furthermore, there is a clear agenda underlying these narrations in attempting to downplay the role of Abū Ṭālib and magnify the role of 'Abbās.[104]

[104] In other words, it is not far-fetched that the Abbasids fabricated these narrations to aggrandize their status and render support for their claim to the caliphate.

5

Common Contentions on the Āyah al-Tablīgh

After presenting all the evidence above, we hope that the educated and unbiased reader will be able to adjudicate the signification of this verse for themselves. Nonetheless, there are often several contentions that are brought up in understanding this verse. Below, we will discuss some of the most common ones; and we will present the arguments here using a Devil's Advocate style. Wherever possible, we will also include who has mentioned these contentions.

1. The meaning of the verse *"mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika"* (what has been revealed to you from your Lord) simply implies the "entirety of the Qurān" and has nothing to do with any specific message. In other words, Allah was just telling the Prophet ﷺ that if you do not deliver the whole book, then it is as if you have not delivered the Message at all.[105]

As we demonstrated in our contextual discussion of the *mafhūm* (conceptual understanding), this verse was revealed during the Medinite period, likely at the end of the Prophet's life. Given that this is the case, there is in fact no significant difference in the *mafhūm* even if we take the meaning of *"mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika"* to mean "the entire Qurān." The Noble Prophet ﷺ had already delivered a great portion of the revelation preceding this, and the implication of stating "deliver the whole message" is that

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[105] This contention has been brought forth by several prominent Sunnī polemicists including 'Uthmān al-Khamīs. Al-Ālūsī also makes a similar statement in his book, *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*.

there is still a vitally important part of the religion remaining which he must still deliver. In Arabic terms, this phrase *"mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika"* has a signification of partial accord *(al-dalālah al-taḍammuniyyah)* for a particular revelation. This is based on a pragmatic understanding of language, as we will explain below.

To demonstrate what we mean, consider an analogy: Suppose you have a friend who sent you three separate packages in the mail. The mailman delivered two of them, but still has not delivered one of the packages to you. Therefore, you tell them: "Deliver all the packages, otherwise you have not truly delivered the shipment." The pragmatic understanding of this statement is that there is a final package which is yet to be delivered.

In other words, even if we propose that the meaning is to "deliver the entire Qurān," given the fact that this is a late Medinite verse, the implication automatically becomes that a part of the revelation has not yet been delivered.

Therefore, the only way in which this interpretation holds weight is if it was an early Makkan verse, and if the Prophet ﷺ had not delivered a single part of the revelation yet and Allah ﷻ was commanding him in this fashion, then only it would be that the meaning of *"mā unzila ilayka min Rabbika"* would be "the entire Qurānic revelation." In terms of our analogy, if the mailman has not delivered any of the packages at all to you yet and you chide them by saying: "Deliver the shipment given to you otherwise you have not done your job," only then would the implication be the entire shipment. But as we demonstrated earlier, there is a preponderance of rational and traditionist evidence to suggest that this verse was a late Medinite revelation.

Now someone could argue that "Well of course some revelation had not been delivered yet. There may have still been some verses left of the Qurān related to the final rules of inheritance or usury." However, the contender is forgetting that the Message referenced in this verse was something that the Prophet ﷺ was reluctant to reveal to the people. He was worried that after its delivery, the

Message would disintegrate. This is why Allah ﷻ promised him His protection. Therefore, based on pragmatics, the *mafhūm* (conceptual understanding) remains as is: That there was something residual of the revelation that was going to be a bombshell. The rules of Islam *(Aḥkām)*, or verses that pertain to basic Monotheism *(Tawḥīd)* cannot possibly be the *maṣādīq* (particular representations) because there was never any hesitation from the Prophet ﷺ about delivering these things in the first place.[106]

2. This verse is simply to affirm that the Prophet ﷺ did not hide anything of the revelation; and the protection Allah ﷻ is promising him is against the people claiming that he hid anything of the Qurān. These Shīʿah believe that the Prophet ﷺ hid the revelation from others and was doing *taqiyyah* (dissimulation) his whole life, and this verse is the strongest proof against their claim.[107]

The mental acrobatics that are employed to escape the apparent meaning *(al-ẓuhūr)* of this verse are quite interesting. Our answer will come in two parts: firstly, why this interpretation is untenable; and secondly, why this is primarily an appeal to emotions.

In fact, the commentators who have advocated this interpretation have very conveniently redirected the entire verse

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[106] For advanced readers, we would recommend reading through the discussion of ʿAllāmah Ṭabāʾṭabāʾī regarding this issue in his commentary, *Tafsīr al-Mizān*.

[107] This contention is mentioned by Rashīd Riḍā in his *Tafsīr al-Manār*, as well as Ibn ʿĀshūr in his *Al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*. Some also utilize the *ḥadīth* of ʿĀʾishah in *Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī* which states: "Whoever states that Muḥammad hid something of what Allah revealed to him has lied." However, this *ḥadīth* is not a proper argument, because it does not appear that ʿĀʾishah is talking about the reason for the revelation of this verse at all. Rather, she is merely stating that a secondary implication of the verse is that the Prophet ﷺ did not hide anything, which we completely agree with.

to attack the Shī'ah. However, this interpretation is extremely contrived and cannot possibly be the circumstance that precipitated the revelation of this verse. First of all, there is no evidence in the Qurān that the Prophet ﷺ was ever even accused by anyone of hiding the revelation given to him by Allah ﷻ; in fact, it was the exact opposite situation. They wanted the Prophet ﷺ to hide the revelation, and he was repeatedly instructed to respond that he cannot and will not ever do so. The Qurān reports the disbelievers as saying the following:

وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتُنَا بَيِّنَٰتٍ قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَآءَنَا ٱئْتِ بِقُرْءَانٍ غَيْرِ هَٰذَآ أَوْ بَدِّلْهُ ۚ قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِيٓ أَنْ أُبَدِّلَهُۥ مِن تِلْقَآيِ نَفْسِىٓ ۖ إِنْ أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰٓ إِلَىَّ ۖ إِنِّىٓ أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّى عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٥﴾

"And when Our clear revelations are recited to them, those who do not expect to meet Us say: 'Bring us a different Qurān or make some changes to it.' Say (O Muḥammad): 'It is not for me to change it on my own (accord). I only follow what is revealed to me. I fear, if I were to disobey my Lord, the punishment of a tremendous Day.'" (Sūrah Yūnus (10), verse 15)

Therefore, to claim that this verse was revealed because people were accusing the Prophet ﷺ of hiding what Allah ﷻ revealed to him is completely unsustainable. There is no evidence for such a claim from the Prophet's biography.

Secondly, the phraseology of Allah's promise here goes against this interpretation. The Prophet ﷺ is told that Allah ﷻ will protect him "from the people" *(min al-nās);* if the meaning here had specifically been accusations of shortcoming *(al-taqṣīr),* then why did the verse not mention that? Furthermore, the end of the verse also points against this view where it says that Allah ﷻ does not guide the *kāfirīn* (literally, those who seek to cover the truth). If the meaning had been those who attribute lies to the Prophetic

Message or Mission *(Risālah)*, or who fabricate claims that it is incomplete, then it would have been more appropriate for the verse to mention *"al-muftarīn"* (the fabricators) or *"al-ẓālimīn"* (the oppressors).

Finally, if we were to assume that this argument were correct for a moment, then the protection that Allah ﷻ is offering the Prophet ﷺ becomes ineffective because then this argument means that the Shīʿah really claim that the Qurān is incomplete and the Prophet ﷺ did *taqiyyah*, so the Prophet ﷺ has not really been protected from the claims of the people and that his revelation is incomplete!

In the second place, the claim being made about the Shīʿah here is patently incorrect: it is interesting that the individuals who make this claim do not bring forward the views of any Shīʿah scholar to substantiate that this is what they believe. We concede that although there have been some heretical movements among the Shīʿah who claimed this, the Shīʿah orthodoxy belief is that the Qurān has no deficiencies, additions, or alterations.[108] It is in this vein that we find one of the forerunners of the Shīʿah school of thought, Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381 AH), stating the following:

اعتقادنا أن القرآن الذي أنزله الله تعالى على نبيه محمد صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم هو ما بين الدفتين، وهو ما في أيدي الناس، ليس بأكثر من ذلك، ومبلغ سوره عند الناس مائة وأربع عشرة سورة وعندنا أن الضحى وألم نشرح سورة

[108] There have of course been some rare individuals who have fallen out of the scope of this orthodox view. Among these was the great *muḥaddith*, Mirzā Ḥusayn al-Nūrī, in his *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb fī Taḥrīf Kitāb Rabb al-Arbāb*. However, this book has been thoroughly refuted by Shīʿah scholars. It should also be said that the Sunnīs also contain some narrations in their authentic books, the *Ṣiḥāḥ*, which suggest *taḥrīf* (distortion), but this should not be used to substantiate that Sunnīs believe in this doctrine. Space does not allow for a detailed treatment of this issue, suffice it to say that there is a clear double standard at play here.

واحدة، ولايلاف وألم تر كيف سورة واحدة والأنفال والتوبة سورة واحدة. ومن نسب إلينا أنا نقول إنه أكثر من ذلك فهو كاذب

"Our belief is that the Qurān which Allah, the All-High, revealed to the Prophet ﷺ is what is between the two covers; it is what the people now have without anything more than that. The number of sūrahs per the common people (i.e., the Sunnīs) is 114, while we believe that al-Ḍuḥā and al-Inshirāḥ are one sūrah; al-Fīl and al-Quraysh are one sūrah; and al-Anfāl and al-Tawbah are one sūrah. As for the one who ascribes to us the statement that the Qurān is more than this, they are a liar."[109]

Hence, both the interpretation that the contender proposes, and his accusation against the Shī'ah are thoroughly refuted.

3. If Imām 'Alī's ﷺ *Wilāyah* is so important as you state, then why is he not mentioned in the Qurān explicitly by name? The Qurān itself states that it is all-comprehensive and contains everything that is needed for the salvation of all of humanity. Then why is this extremely important message not properly mentioned?[110]

The entire underlying methodology of this question is highly presumptuous and problematic. The questioner is demanding that the level of evidence for Imām 'Alī's ﷺ *Wilāyah* be provided at the level of their specifications, like how the polytheists of Makkah told the Prophet ﷺ:

وَقَالُوا۟ لَن نُّؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ ٱلْأَرْضِ يَنۢبُوعًا ﴿٩٠﴾ أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّن نَّخِيلٍ وَعِنَبٍ فَتُفَجِّرَ ٱلْأَنْهَٰرَ خِلَٰلَهَا تَفْجِيرًا ﴿٩١﴾ أَوْ تُسْقِطَ ٱلسَّمَآءَ

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[109] Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *Al-I'tiqādāt fī Dīn al-Imāmiyyah*, Pg. 84.

[110] This contention is brought up by even some Shī'ah laity, although it is a common argument among the polemicists, as well as Rāmī 'Īsā and 'Uthmān al-Khamīs.

كَمَا زَعَمْتَ عَلَيْنَا كِسَفًا أَوْ تَأْتِيَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْمَلَٰئِكَةِ قَبِيلًا ﴿٩٢﴾ أَوْ يَكُونَ لَكَ
بَيْتٌ مِّن زُخْرُفٍ أَوْ تَرْقَىٰ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَن نُّؤْمِنَ لِرُقِيِّكَ حَتَّىٰ تُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا
كِتَابًا نَّقْرَؤُهُ ۗ قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّي هَلْ كُنتُ إِلَّا بَشَرًا رَّسُولًا ﴿٩٣﴾

"And they (the disbelievers) say: 'We will never believe in you (O Muḥammad) until you cause to gush forth for us a spring from the earth; or you possess a garden of date-palms and grapes, and cause rivers to gush forth within them abundantly; or you cause the sky to fall upon us—as you have claimed—in pieces; or you bring Allah and the angels before (us); or you have a house of gold, or you ascend into the sky. And never will we believe in your ascension until you bring down to us a book which we can read.' Say: 'Glorified (is) my Lord! What am I but a human Messenger!'" (Sūrah al-Isrā' (17), verses 90-93)

In other words, just as the polytheists had demanded of the Prophet ﷺ a certain level of evidence to necessitate their belief, this contender is also dictating that this type of proof must be given. Therefore, the underlying presumption of this question in dictating to Allah ﷻ the type of evidence needed is completely fallacious. Allah ﷻ provides the signs that He chooses, and we have no right to demand that the proof should match a certain preconceived format. Rather, the proofs for the *Wilāyah* of Imām 'Alī ؑ that have been given are **abundant** in the Qurān and the *Sunnah* for the discerning people.[111]

Nonetheless, we may be able to suggest some possible reasons why the Qurān did not specifically mention the name of Imām 'Alī

[111] Entire books have been written solely examining this topic, most illustrious among them being the encyclopedic *'Abaqāt al-Anwar* of Sayyid Ḥāmid Ḥusayn al-Mūsawī in 30 volumes, may Allah have mercy on his soul. For the curious readers, a summary of some volumes of the book in English can be found here: https://alabaqat.com/1.html.

ﷺ, although these remain mere possibilities *(al-iḥtimālāt)*, and Allah ﷻ knows best:

a. Neither the name ʿAlī, nor Abū Ṭālib, were unique names among the Arabs, rather they were common amongst them. Therefore, even if the name had been mentioned, it would not at all have been definitive as the contender assumes. Rather, in clarifying the heir to the Prophet ﷺ, the better route was to employ descriptions of his status, different merits which he achieved, and certain actions that he specifically performed, and this we find quite amply employed in the Qurān. This does not allow anyone to change the labels such that a case of identity obfuscation could be rendered feasible. The descriptions stand on their own merit, and those who are worthy of them are not ambiguous.[112]

b. As we have been discussing throughout this analysis, there were a large number of individuals who bore animosity against ʿAlī ﷺ, and this is precisely why the Prophet ﷺ was hesitant to make this proclamation. Declaring your son-in-law and cousin as the successor and caliph did not sit well with many of those who professed the faith. A clear and unequivocal statement within the Qurān would have predisposed this group towards tampering with the text and/or potentially reneging on the religion altogether. In other words, the very fear which the Prophet ﷺ carried would have been actualized; thus, the approach that the Qurān employed in alluding to the *Wilāyah* of Imām ʿAlī

[112] Among these *āyāt*, some of them are as follows: *Āyah al-Taṭhīr* (33:33), *Āyah al-Mubāhalah* (3:61), *Āyah al-Wilāyah* (5:55), *Āyah al-Ṭāʿah* (4:59), *Āyah al-Mawaddah* (42:23), *Āyah Mīrāth al-Kitāb* (35:32), *Āyah Ulū al-Arḥām* (33:6), *Āyah Dhū al-Qurbā* (17:26), *Āyah al-Imāmah* (2:124), *Āyah al-Shāhid* (11:17), *Āyah ʿIlm al-Kitāb* (13:43), *Āyah al-Naṣb* (94:7), among many other verses.

ﷺ was the very manifestation of the *'iṣmah* (immunity from sins and Divine protection) in delivery that was promised to the Prophet ﷺ.

c. There is a clear double standard that the contender carries with this question. There are a number of practices found in the Prophetic Exposition *(Al-Sunnah al-Qaṭ'iyyah)* that are not featured in the Qurān, except as wide general principles. For instance, the details of *ṣalāt* and *ḥajj* are not clearly expounded in the Qurān, but instead are sought in the Prophetic *Sunnah*.[113] However, when it comes to *Wilāyah* and *Imāmah*, the questioner suddenly turns blind to this reality and refuses to concede that the Qurān discusses the principle of *Wilāyah* and *Imāmah* in its generalities![114]

4. If the Verse of *Tablīgh* is telling the Prophet ﷺ that he has not delivered the Message of Imām 'Alī ﷺ being his successor, then this invalidates all the proofs that the Shī'ahs try to use to substantiate Imām 'Alī's *Wilāyah* which had taken place even before Ghadīr.[115]

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[113] Let not any individual state that these are parts of practice and not belief, therefore this is not a proper analogy. Rather, these practices are cornerstones of Islam just as we contend *Imāmah* is: it is unanimously agreed upon that one who abandons prayers is a disbeliever. In a similar manner, it is narrated by both Shī'ah and Sunnī sources that one who dies without an Imām dies the death of ignorance.

[114] I am indebted to the excellent answers on this topic by Āyatullāh Ṣādeqī Ṭehrānī in his *tafsīr* on the Verse of *Tablīgh;* as well as Sayyid 'Alī Abū Ḥusayn's excellent answer on this topic in Arabic, found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azeuv0W-qQ8

[115] This is a clever argument employed by 'Uthmān al-Khamīs in one of his videos where he attempts to address the Shī'ah arguments on the Verse of *Tablīgh*. Basically, in other words, Khamīs is saying that the verse's command to declare Imām 'Alī's ﷺ successorship implies that up until that point in Ghadīr, the Prophet ﷺ had not declared it. Therefore,

Rather, we will go one step further than the contender because we have understood the Qurānic verse properly. It very clearly states that if the Prophet ﷺ does not reveal the Message he is being commanded to give, then his entire Message will become null and void. Could we then state based on this that all the teachings the Prophet ﷺ delivered up to the appointment of Imām 'Alī ؑ were invalidated and worthless?! This type of malicious rhetoric and twisted logic is precisely the problem with some polemicists.

Rather, we state that the statements which the Prophet ﷺ delivered prior to Ghadīr were implicit affirmations of Imām 'Alī's qualifications and suitability for being the Prophet's successor. However, Allah ﷻ then commanded His Prophet ﷺ to state this fact plain and openly as to leave no doubt about the matter *(itmām al-ḥujjah)*. Unfortunately, we still have some people today who question this entire event.[116]

It is as the great poet of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, Al-Sayyid Ismā'īl al-Ḥimyarī (d. 179 AH) has beautifully put it in his famous *Qaṣīdah al-'Ayniyyah* (Panegyric Poetry):

I wonder at a folk who to Aḥmad brought,	عجبت من قوم أتوا أحمدا
Speech that was not of wisdom wrought.	بخطبة ليس لها موضع

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this means that Allah ﷻ did not deem the previously mentioned verses of the Qurān or the *aḥādīth* like *Ḥadīth al-Manzilah, Ḥadīth al-Ṭayr, Ḥadīth al-Wilāyah, Ḥadīth Da'wah Dhūl 'Ashīrah*, etc., sufficiently clear proofs of Imām 'Alī's *Wilāyah*. Therefore, it follows that the Shī'ahs cannot use them to prove any of their claims.

[116] This is precisely what prompted the scholar 'Allāmah 'Abdul Ḥusayn al-Amīnī to publish his encyclopedic work called *Al-Ghadīr* in 20 volumes. In this book, he substantiates that *Ḥadīth al-Ghadīr* is authentic in source *(qat'iyy al-ṣudūr)* and unequivocal in import *(qat'iyy al-dilālah)* for the appointment of Imām 'Alī ؑ as the Prophet's ﷺ rightful heir.

They said: "If you wish, then to us do pray tell,
To whom is your standard—with whom should we dwell.
When us you depart, and your soul is raised?"
While stood among them those who power craved!
He said: "Had I named for you whom to hold,
Perchance you would follow that selfsame mold.
Of those folk that bowed to a calf that was golden,
When they belied Aaron—nay to veil I'm behoven!"
But in what he said there was no opacity,
For he who takes heed or shows sagacity.
But then came to him that holy decree,
By his Lord, from which none can ever flee.
"Deliver it! Lest you fall short in His Message,
And Allah will protect and defend you from wreckage!"

قالوا له: لو شئت أعلمتنا
إلى من الغاية والمفز
إذا توفيت وفارقتنا
وفيهم في الملك من يطمع
فقال: لو أعلمتكم مفزعا
كنتم عسيتم فيه أن تصنعوا
صنيع أهل العجل إذ فارقوا
هارون فالترك له أودع
وفي الذي قال بيان لمن
كان إذا يعقل أو يسمع
ثم أتته بعد ذا عزمة
من ربه ليس لها مدفع
أبلغ وإلا لم تكن مبلغا
والله منهم عاصم يمنع

Right then and there, the Prophet then rose,	فعندها قام النبي الذي
For Allah's commands he did always disclose.	كان بما يأمره يصدع
He spoke by Allah's order, and clasped in his palm,	يخطب مأمورا وفي كفه
Was that palm of 'Alī, manifestly shone.	كف علي ظاهرا تلمع
How noble those palms of the raiser and raised,	رافعها أكرم بكف الذي
In nobility paired, transcending all praise.	يرفع والكف الذي يرفع
Then he said—while angels around him surrounded,	يقول والاملاك من حوله
While Allah was his witness in what he resounded:	والله فيهم شاهد يسمع
"To whomsoever as their Master *(Mawlā)* I'm meant,	من كنت مولاه فهذا له
Then 'Alī is their Master *(Mawlā)*"—but they're still not content![117]	مولى فلم يرضوا ولم يقنعوا

5. The Shī'ah believe that all the companions became disbelievers *(kuffār)* because they claim they attempted to hide Imām 'Alī's ﷺ appointment. In fact, the biggest proof that their claim is wrong is that the companions of the Prophet ﷺ unanimously did not accept the appointment at

[117] *Alḥamdulillāh*, we have been granted the great honour to render this poem completely in rhyming English couplets:
www.iqraonline.net/a-translation-and-commentary-on-the-epic-ode-of-sayyid-al-himyari-for-imam-ali-as/

> Ghadīr as evidence that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was the Prophet's successor. This invalidates Allah's promise to protect the Message and not guide the efforts of those who seek to cover the Message, because the purported claim was not even accepted by the Muslims themselves.[118]

There are several superimposed misconceptions in this answer. Firstly, there is a blatant generalization that the Shīʿah think "all the companions" denied this fact. In fact, the Shīʿah corpus demonstrates that we revere numerous sincere companions of the Prophet ﷺ.[119] As we discussed in our contextual analysis of the verse, the meaning of *kāfir* in the verse is not in the meaning of a "disbeliever," but rather the original etymological implication of the word means "the one who covers up (the truth)." Therefore, it is incorrect to surmise that the Shīʿah believe that the companions became apostates.[120] However, they do believe that political

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[118] This is a contention elaborated by the infamous scholar, Al-Borqeʿī, in his discussion about the Verse of *Tablīgh*.

[119] For instance, the Shīʿah scholar, Al-Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn al-Mūsawī, has written an article entitled: *Al-Ṣahābah ʿinda al-Shīʿah al-Imāmiyyah* - The Companions in the View of the Twelver Shīʿahs, in which he enumerates righteous companions exceeding over 150 names.

Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī (d. 1104 AH) in his treatise, *Risālah fī Maʿrifah al-Ṣaḥābah* (A Memorandum on Recognition of the Companions), recounts the names of 481 righteous companions of the Prophet ﷺ.

[120] There are some narrations that one may find to this effect in the Shīʿah books, however, these narrations are classically misinterpreted; the meaning of apostasy *(irtidād)* in these *aḥādīth* is not 'leaving the religion.' Rather, it is the etymological meaning of 'turning one's back on the pledge made at Ghadīr.' Regardless, it should be said that some Sunnī *aḥādīth* themselves implicate the companions of doing *irtidād!* For example, consider the following narration that is found in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*:

aspirations and desire for leadership led to the usurpation of the right of Imām 'Alī ﷺ; this was a monumental crime, and its repercussions are still felt today.

As for the claim that the companions unanimously believed that Ghadīr was not an explicit appointment of Imām 'Alī ﷺ as the heir of the Prophet ﷺ, we draw the reader's attention to several crucial points:

a. There was in fact no consensus on this point; Abū Bakr's caliphate was not primarily enacted, except on the basis of a handful of individuals (what the Sunnīs term as *"ahl al-'aqd wa al-ḥill"* (the decision makers - the people who bind and dispense).[121]

b. Many of the *Muhājirūn*[122] and most of the *Anṣār*[123] withheld their initial allegiance to Abū Bakr precisely

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عن أبي هريرة أنه كان يحدّث أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: يرِد عليَّ يوم القيامة رهط من أصحابي، فيُحَلْؤون عن الحوض، فأقول: يا ربِّ أصحابي. فيقول: إنك لا علم لك بما أحدثوا بعدك، إنهم ارتدوا على أدبارهم القهقرى

"On the authority of Abū Hurayrah who used to say that the Prophet ﷺ said: 'A people from among my companions will come to me (on the Day of Judgement) and they will be driven away from my Pond. I will say: 'O my Lord, (these are) my companions!' He will respond: 'You do not know at all what they innovated after you; they completely turned *(irtidād)* on their backs.'"

[121] Therefore, the Sunnī scholars *('ulamā)* differ on how many individuals need to give allegiance *(al-bay'ah)* to establish a government. For instance, Al-Māwurdī in his book, *Kitab al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah,* states that Abū Bakr's leadership was established by the allegiance of five men, and that 'Uthmān's leadership was established through the consensus of five individuals in a party of six.

[122] *Muhājirūn* are the emigrants, those Muslims who migrated from Makkah to Medina due to suffering persecution at the hands of the Quraysh.

[123] *Anṣār* are the helpers, those local inhabitants of Medina who welcomed the Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims from Makkah into their homes

because they knew that Imām 'Alī ﷺ had already been appointed to that position.[124]

c. There was a great deal of animosity against Imām 'Alī ﷺ because he had wiped out many of the elites of the Quraysh who had come to fight against the Prophet ﷺ in various battles. There was also a lot of animosity against the Prophet ﷺ by several people and repressing and subjugating his family was a method to exact requital.[125]

d. There were those who attempted to view the caliphate as a purely political decision, rather than a religious one. Therefore, they justified using excuses such as the young age of Imām 'Alī ﷺ, or his love for his kinsmen to preclude him from this position.[126]

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and accepted Islam as their religion. Two major tribes who accepted Islam were the Banū Khazraj and Banū Aws.

[124] Therefore, we find one of the early Sunnī historians, Al-Zubayr ibn Bakkār (256 AH), writes the following in his book, *Al-Akhbār al-Muwaffaqiyyāt*":

وكان عامة المهاجرين وجل الأنصار لا يشكون أن عليا هو صاحب الأمر بعد رسول الله

"The majority of the *Muhājirūn* and most of the *Anṣār* had no doubt that Imām 'Alī was the owner of the affair (i.e., leadership) after the Prophet."

[125] Thus, Al-Haythamī narrates in his book, *Majma' al-Zawā'id* that:

عن علي قلت: يا رسول الله ما يبكيك، قال: ضغائن في صدور أقوام لا يبدونها لك الا من بعدي،قال: قلت يا رسول الله في سلامة من ديني، قال :في سلامة من دينك

"On the authority of 'Alī, I said: 'O Messenger of Allah, what makes you cry?' He said: 'There are grudges in the hearts of people who will not express them to you except after me.' I asked: 'O Messenger of Allah, will I be safe in my religion?' He replied: 'You will be safe in your religion.'"

[126] As attributed to 'Umar in *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* that he said:

كرهناه على حداثة السن وحبه بني عبد المطلب

e. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ himself used the Event of Ghadīr to level his protest against the companions when they elected others to the caliphate.[127]

f. There is a huge fallacy latent in the doctrine of the Absolute Impeccability of the Companions *(ʿAdālat al-Ṣaḥābah)*. In fact, the Qurān is quite clear that there was a large group of individuals who were on the brink of leaving the religion and were only bridled by the Prophet's existence among them:

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِهِ ٱلرُّسُلُ ۚ أَفَإِيْن مَّاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ ٱنقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَىٰٓ أَعْقَٰبِكُمْ ۚ وَمَن يَنقَلِبْ عَلَىٰ عَقِبَيْهِ فَلَن يَضُرَّ ٱللَّهَ شَيْـًٔا ۗ وَسَيَجْزِى ٱللَّهُ ٱلشَّٰكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

"And Muḥammad is nothing but a Messenger; other Messengers have passed (away) before him. So if he dies or is killed, will you turn back on your heels?" (Sūrah Āle ʿImrān (3): verse 144)

Furthermore, we need to consider the famous *ḥadīth* of the Prophet ﷺ, agreed upon by both sects which is as follows:

"We disliked him due to his young age, and his love for the children of (Banī) ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib."

[127] For example, this narration from Al-Khawārizmī al-Ḥanafī in his book, *Al-Manāqib* is as follows:

عن أبي الطفيل عامر بن واثلة، قال: كنت على الباب يوم الشورى مع علي، وسمعته يقول لهم: فأنشدكم الله: هل فيكم أحد قال له رسول الله: من كنت مولاه فعلي مولاه

"On the authority of Abī al-Ṭufāyl ʿĀmir ibn Wāthilah, he said: 'I was at the door on the Day of the Shūra (council) with ʿAlī and I heard him say to them: 'I adjure you by God: Is there anyone among you to whom the Messenger of Allah said: 'Whomsoever I am their master, then ʿAlī is their master?'''"

عن أبي سعيد رضي الله عنه، أنَّ النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: لَتَتَّبِعُنَّ سَنَنَ مَنْ قَبْلَكُم شِبْرًا بشبْر، وذراعًا بذراع، حتَّى لو سَلَكُوا جُحْر ضَبٍّ لَسَلَكْتُمُوهُ؛ قلنا: يا رسول الله؛ اليهودُ والنَّصارى؟ قال النَّبيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَمَن؟!

"On the authority of Abū Sa'īd (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet ﷺ said: 'You will follow the paths of those who preceded you: span by span and cubit by cubit; so much so that if they entered the hole of a lizard, you will also follow them (and enter the hole of a lizard).' We asked: 'Do you mean the Christians and the Jews, O Messenger of Allah?' He retorted: 'Whom else?'"[128]

When we consider the fact that the Jews and Christians commonly repudiated and rejected the successors of their Prophets ﷺ, then we should not be surprised if the Muslim nation *(ummah)* does the same.[129]

Therefore, claiming that the companions were unanimous on the issue of the Caliphate is at best an oversimplification, and at worst an obfuscation of the nuanced political scene at that time.

Finally, as we discussed before, Allah ﷻ did not promise the Prophet ﷺ that the Message would be **followed** by the people, He only promised that the Prophet ﷺ and His Message would be **protected** despite its deliverance. Therefore, whether the companions observed the commandment of Ghadīr and abided by it or not has no bearing on Allah's promise to safeguard the Message. The clearest indication that Allah ﷻ protected the Ghadīr proclamation is that the event is still widely attested to in

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[128] This *ḥadīth* is narrated in *Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī*, and it is also found in Shī'ah sources with slightly different wordings.

[129] Consider how Banū Isrā'īl refused to follow Prophet Hārūn ﷺ; how only a handful of them followed Ṭālūt; and how the Christians turned to Paul instead of Peter for their religious guidance. If the nations of old did this, then why would we think that the companions of the final Prophet ﷺ were incapable of doing the same?

numerous resources of the Ahl as-Sunnah literature, to the extent that it has been deemed a *mutawātir ḥadīth*![130]

6. Even if we submit to your entire thesis, *wilāyah* at Ghadīr was simply about friendship and assistance of ʿAlī ﷺ *(al-maḥabbah wa al-nuṣrah)*. Even if we propose that it means authority as you claim *(al-sulṭah)*, it could simply mean intellectual authority here, not necessarily religious or political authority.

In fact, this is the purpose of writing this entire piece substantiating that the Verse of *Tablīgh* was specifically revealed regarding the proclamation at Ghadīr. When this is substantiated, then it becomes impossible to believe that the meaning of *mawlā* in the statement of the Prophet ﷺ: "Whosoever's master *(mawlā)* I am, then ʿAlī is their master *(mawlā)*" simply means "love or assistance." This is what we call in Arabic terminology *"tahṣīl al-ḥāṣil"* (a foregone conclusion): in other words, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ as a believer already warranted love and assistance, therefore, the Prophet ﷺ stopping an entire procession of pilgrims at Ghadīr just to make this announcement is extremely far-fetched and preposterous.

Furthermore, given that we have substantiated that the Verse of *Tablīgh* is explicitly related to the Event of Ghadīr, this completely demolishes any claim that the *Wilāyah* referenced here is simply that of intellectual authority. If Allah ﷻ is telling His Prophet ﷺ that without making this declaration his **entire** Message is futile, then this means that accepting the authority of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ in matters of religion is a compulsory religious obligation.

In an attempt to reconcile the facts, there are those who attempt to separate the Prophet's successorship into two parts: the political

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[130] This is a narration wherein many narrators have reported its occurrence that it is impossible to fathom that it is a fabrication. The event of Ghadīr has been narrated by at least 110 companions of the Prophet ﷺ.

component (what they term as *al-khilāfah al-ẓāhirah)*, and the religious/spiritual component (what they term as *al-khilāfah al-bāṭinah*).[131] However, there are two arguments against this type of fallacious reasoning:

A. The first argument is that there is no explicit proof that such a differentiation is valid. If the Prophet ﷺ had clarified this dichotomy, then perhaps this type of reasoning could be proposed. However, since there is absolutely no clear appointment from the Prophet ﷺ for Abū Bakr in the first place, then how can one arbitrarily impose this division?

B. The Prophet ﷺ was as much a religious leader as he was a political authority. Therefore, it follows that his successor should also possess both these traits.[132]

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[131] Many Ṣufī orders are quite notorious for making this claim, stating that 'Alī was their *qutb* (which literally means 'axis' - a perfect human being is known as *insān al-kāmil* in Arabic, one who leads the saintly hierarchy among the saints who are granted existential authority - *Al-Wilāyah al-Takwīnīyyah*), but the political leadership went to the first three caliphs before him. The famous Sunnī commentator, Al-Ālūsī, was among those who advocated this view. For more information, advanced readers are recommended to check out his commentary on the Verse of *Wilāyah* (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 55).

[132] I am indebted to Hujjatul Islam, Muḥammad Qaisar, for this answer in his discussion entitled, *Imāmah ki Taqsim Mumkin Nahi hai* (The Partitioning of Imāmate is not possible) which is in Urdu and can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMQuB8hIgYo

Appendices

Appendix A

If Imām ʿAlī's Appointment was So Important, then Why did the Prophet ﷺ Wait until Ghadīr to Give this Announcement?

Among the common arguments presented by Sunnī polemicists is the question that: Why did the Prophet ﷺ wait until Ghadīr to announce the appointment of Imām ʿAlī ؑ as his successor? In other words, they claim that if this Message was truly as important as the Shīʿah claim, then it does not seem to be rational that the Prophet ﷺ would postpone it until his route of return from the Farewell Pilgrimage. Rather, he would have made this proclamation in the middle of his sermon at ʿArafah. They claim that the Shīʿah constantly portray the Prophet ﷺ as doing dissimulation *(al-taqiyyah)*, and that the Ahl al-Sunnah are those who project the Prophet ﷺ as a fearless individual who always delivered what he was commanded. Using this impressive rhetorical flourish, they state that the Shīʿah narrative is one that makes the Prophet ﷺ look weak (God forbid) and scared of his companions, while the truth was that the Prophet ﷺ was ever ready to deliver the Truth and never feared them. Furthermore, they claim that the companions had been with the Prophet ﷺ through thick-and-thin and would not question his commands.[133]

We will address this argument backwards, first unpacking all the rhetoric, then discussing the requirements underlying the appointment at Ghadīr. Firstly, as we demonstrated in the contentions section, the companions were not a monolith: there

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[133] For instance, one can look here for an example of how this rhetoric is used by the opposition: https://mahajjah.com/shia-beliefs-the-verse-of-tabligh/

were some righteous individuals, some who had diseases in their hearts, and some who were outright hypocrites.[134] There were some who were duped by the allure of this world, and there were others who were sincere in their aspirations for the Hereafter.[135] There were those who put their own *ijtihād*[136] over that of the Prophet ﷺ, and others who obeyed his commands.[137] Therefore, to

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[134] This is a correct picture of the companions derived from the Qurān itself; as for the notion that all of the companions were righteous, this is a huge fallacy not wrought except through a naïve understanding of the Qurānic verses, as we demonstrated previously.

[135] Recall the verse describing the companions of the Prophet : "...among you are those who desire this world, and among you are those who desire the Hereafter..." (Sūrah Āle 'Imrān (3), verse 152)

[136] The term *ijtihād* in Islamic Jurisprudence is a legal word to expend intellectual effort to derive and infer the legal *(sharʿī)* rulings - whether in affirmation or in negation - from religious sources like the Qurān and the Narrations *(Riwāyāt)* by a jurist whose expertise is in Islamic Jurisprudence *(al-Fiqh)*. Although, the term has both linguistic and technical meanings, and the meaning is understood differently in various time periods, here we only define it in a brief technical sense. For further elaboration, see this article: iqraonline.net/sayyid-sistani-what-is-ijtihad/

[137] We can reference several events to show how the companions repeatedly did not follow the Prophet's commands. For example, consider the Battle of Uḥud, the Battle of Ḥunayn, the Tragedy of Thursday, their disobedience to join the army of Usāmah, etc. Also, consider the repeated assassination attempts on the Prophet's life, especially at al-ʿAqabah by around 12-15 companions. Recall that two individuals, who are highly esteemed by the Sunnīs, argued with each other loudly in the presence of the Prophet ﷺ, prompting the revelation of the first verses of Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt. These are just a few instances of the disobedience of the companions towards the Noble Prophet ﷺ, but there are many other examples in history.

assume that the companions were all of one character or type smacks an extreme level of historical gullibility.[138]

Secondly, regarding the Prophet's ﷺ fear: it is quite ironic that the Shī'ah are being demonized about this when they are precisely the ones defending the Prophet's ﷺ honour. As we mentioned in the contextual discussion, the Prophet ﷺ never feared for his life and struggled to spread Allah's Message regardless of any personal cost incurred. However, it is a fact that the Prophet ﷺ did fear the people in delivering some specific messages, specifically because he was worried that they would compromise his Prophethood and certain messages, or go back on their creed.[139] This is a natural and caring anxiety, but it does not indicate any weakness on the part of the Prophet ﷺ; rather, it indicates his keen insight into the multifaceted nature of his society and his companions. On the contrary, we would contend that it is in fact many of the Sunnī

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[138] Unfortunately, this is precisely the unnuanced narrative that is promulgated in Sunnī circles, namely the doctrine of *'Adālat al-Ṣaḥābah* (Absolute Impeccability of all the Companions). This is done under the pretext of believing that anyone who questions the companions is questioning the Noble Prophet ﷺ, because they transmitted his actions to us. However, in reality, there is nothing pious *(ta'abbudī)* about believing all the companions were righteous. The Qurān is the strongest proof against this, as it presents a nuanced milieu of the various individuals who surrounded the Prophet ﷺ.

[139] Recall verse 144 of Sūrah Āle 'Imrān which is quite clear in censuring the companions about whether they will turn back after the Prophet's demise. There is another proper and correct viewpoint derived from the Qurān itself where Allah ﷻ says: "Perhaps you may feel inclined to leave some of what is revealed to you and your chest feels straitened, lest they say: 'Why is a treasure not sent down to him, or why does an angel not come down upon him?'" (Sūrah Hūd (11), verse 12). Also consider Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33), verse 37, which is quite clear that the Prophet ﷺ feared the people when he was commanded by Allah ﷻ to marry the divorced wife of his adopted son, Zayd.

narratives regarding the reason of revelation for Verse of *Tablīgh* that portray the Prophet ﷺ as psychologically weak (God forbid).[140]

Thirdly, although this contention might seem powerful at first glance, it is quite impotent as there is no rational exigency for the Prophet ﷺ to deliver a message to the largest number of people. Rather, there were rules of *ḥajj*, fasting, *zakāt*, and *ṣalāt* that those around the Prophet ﷺ witnessed at any given time and then transmitted them to others. Not everyone saw the Messenger ﷺ doing all the compulsory acts in front of them, even during their lifetime. Instead, conveying this important Message to so many people suffices for its probativity *(al-ḥujjiyyah)*.[141] When we consider the fact that there were between 10,000-70,000 people present at Ghadīr, this definitively renders it probativity. The fact that this is a *mutawātir ḥadīth* renders it sufficient from an evidentiary standpoint, thus it really makes no difference whether the Prophet ﷺ delivered this Message at Ghadīr or 'Arafah.

Nonetheless, the question persists as to the possible wisdom behind why the Prophet ﷺ did not disclose this *Wilāyah* during their stay on the plains of 'Arafah. Although knowing the precise reason is not necessary as the *ḥujjah* is still binding, we may consider some possibilities, such as these mentioned below:

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[140] Review the previous circumstances of revelation in the *miṣdāq* (particular representation) section: that the Prophet ﷺ used to keep guards for himself due to fear of the enemy, and how he was scared since the start of his Prophethood to reveal Allah's Message, etc.

[141] During the Ghadīr Sermon, several versions indicate that the Prophet ﷺ instructed the companions to relay the *Wilāyah* of Imām 'Alī ﷺ to others. We should consider the clear *ḥadīth* of the Prophet ﷺ regarding this where he said:

إِنِّي أُحَدِّثُكمُ الحديثَ فلْيُحَدِّثِ الحاضرُ منكمُ الغائِبَ

"Indeed, I narrate to each one of you a narration, so let the one who is present among you narrate it to those who are absent." (Recorded by Al-Albānī in his *Ṣaḥīh al-Jāmi'*, Ḥadīth 2446)

1. The Prophet ﷺ was given the Message of Imām ʿAlī's ﷺ *Wilāyah* at ʿArafah, but did not disclose it until afterwards, and specifically after being promised protection by Angel Jibrāʾīl.[142] There were hypocrites during the Pilgrimage *(ḥajj)* who were attempting to suppress the Prophetic declaration of successorship, and therefore Ghadīr was a better choice because it caught these individuals by surprise.[143] Nonetheless, the Prophet ﷺ had tried to deliver this Message at ʿArafah, but then postponed it due to the commotion he noted among all the pilgrims.[144]

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[142] Please review the section on *Riwāyāt* (Narrations) for these references.

[143] This circumstance is alluded to in the famous *Ziyārat of Ghadīr* narrated from the 10th successor, Imām al-Hādī al-Naqī ﷺ where he said:

> وأن الله تعالى استجاب لنبيه صلى الله عليه وآله فيك دعوته تم أمره بإظهار ما أولاك لأمته إعلاء لشأنك وإعلانا لبرهانك ودحضا للأباطيل وقطعا للمعاذير فلما أشفق من فتنة الفاسقين واتقى فيك المنافقين أوحى إليه رب العالمين يا أيها الرسول بلغ ما أنزل إليك من ربك...
>
> "And Almighty Allah responded to the prayer of His Prophet - peace of Allah be upon him and his Household - concerning you (referring to Imām ʿAlī ﷺ). He (Allah) then ordered him (His Messenger) to proclaim the position of succeeding him in (the leadership of) his nation, as a sign of showing your elevated position, declaration of the evidence on your leadership, refutation of the false claims, and repudiation of all excuses. But when he (the Prophet) worried about the sedition that would be aroused by the transgressing group due to such declaration and he did not want you to be faced by the hypocrites, the Lord of the worlds revealed to him, saying: 'O Messenger! Proclaim the Message which has been sent to you from your Lord...'"

[144] In fact, the Prophet ﷺ did indeed refer to the successorship at Ghadīr with two *ḥadīths*: *Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn* (which clearly identifies his family as the stronghold after him), and the *Ḥadīth* of the Twelve Caliphs. There were clear indications in the *Ḥadīth* of the Twelve Caliphs who these successors were going to be, such that the companions began to raise

2. Ghadīr was a better place because it had its own independent significance. In other words, establishing a separate location ensured that this Message could not be confounded or hidden among the other rituals of the pilgrimage or any other distractions. Given that the explicit purpose of the Prophet ﷺ stopping was ONLY to declare Imām 'Alī's ؑ successorship, no one can obfuscate as to why the Prophet ﷺ stopped at this site, and no one can attempt to confound or confuse it within the ceremonies of *ḥajj*.[145]
3. Given that Ghadīr was the final juncture point before the pilgrims went back to their own homes, it served as an even stronger reminder that Imām 'Alī's ؑ successorship was the Prophet's last testament to the companions.

The next contention is slightly more involved: Sunnī polemicists claim that the Verse of *Al-Ikmāl al-Dīn* (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse

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commotion upon this statement by the Prophet ﷺ. There is a *ḥadīth* from Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal narrated from Jābir ibn Samrah which states:

حدثنا: عبد الله، حدثنا: محمد بن أبي بكر بن علي المقدمي، حدثنا: يزيد بن زريع، حدثنا: أبو عون، عن الشعبي، عن جابر ابن سمرة، عن النبي ﷺ، قال: لا يزال هذا الأمر عزيزا منيعا ينصرون على من ناوئهم عليه إلى اثني عشر خليفة، ثم قال كلمة أصمنيها الناس، فقلت لأبي: ما قال، قال: كلهم من قريش

"...On the authority of Jabir ibn Samrah from the Prophet ﷺ that he said, 'This affair will not cease to be glorious and fortified, victorious over anyone who opposes it until the passing of twelve caliphs.' Then he said something which (the commotion of) the people prevented me from hearing; so I asked my father, 'What did he ﷺ say?' He replied, 'All of them are from Quraysh.'"

[145] Consider an analogy: a schoolteacher makes a special separate announcement to the students after the general assembly finishes to emphasize that a particular teacher is being promoted to take on their position.

3) was revealed **prior** to the Verse of *Tablīgh*, and therefore they state that this refutes the significance of Ghadīr's proclamation. This is because the religion had already become complete at 'Arafah before this announcement. In order to properly dissect this issue, we will examine the Verse of *Al-Ikmāl al-Dīn* carefully in the next section.

Appendix B

The Verse of *Al-Ikmāl al-Dīn* - When was It Revealed?

In this section, we would like to address some of the contentions regarding another verse from the Qurān, related to Ghadīr, namely the Verse of *Al-Ikmāl al-Dīn* (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 3).[146] The full verse reads as follows:

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْمَيْتَةُ وَٱلدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ ٱلْخِنزِيرِ وَمَآ أُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ ٱللَّهِ بِهِۦ
وَٱلْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَٱلْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَٱلْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَٱلنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَآ أَكَلَ ٱلسَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ
وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى ٱلنُّصُبِ وَأَن تَسْتَقْسِمُوا۟ بِٱلْأَزْلَٰمِ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ فِسْقٌ ۗ ٱلْيَوْمَ يَئِسَ
ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ مِن دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَٱخْشَوْنِ ۚ ٱلْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ

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[146] This discussion is derived from three sources:

1. An English paper by Dr. Omid Qorbankhani entitled *An Examination of the Linguistic Contextual Elements of Al-Ikmāl Verse in Determining the Meaning of Al-Yawm*, https://is.urd.ac.ir/article_140842.html
2. An Arabic paper by the esteemed Shaykh 'Alī al-Kūrānī entitled *Āyah Ikmāl al-Dīn ma'a Siyāqihā* (The Verse of the Perfection of Religion in its Context).
3. The Arabic work of Āyatullāh Nāṣir Makārim Shirāzī entitled *Āyāt al-Wilāyah fī al-Qurān* (The Verses of *Wilāyah* in the Qurān).

دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا ۚ فَمَنِ
اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرَ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

"Forbidden to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah; that which is strangled, beaten to death, killed by a fall, gored to death, and savaged by beasts of prey except what you kill by your own hands; what is sacrificed on the stone altars, and that you perform divination by arrows – that is grave disobedience. **This day those who disbelieve have despaired of your religion, so do not fear them, but fear Me. This day, I have perfected for you your religion and I have completed upon you My Favour and I have approved for you Islam (as) a religion.** But whoever is forced by hunger and not inclining to sin, then indeed, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, All-Merciful."

The Shīʿah and Ahl al-Sunnah are generally in agreement regarding two major things in reference to the portion of this verse which is in bold:

1. It was revealed during the period of the Farewell Pilgrimage of the Prophet ﷺ.
2. The term "this day" *(al-yawm)* referenced in two parts of this verse refers to the same day.

Although we could discuss this verse at the same level of exhaustive detail that we have done for the Verse of *Tablīgh*, we will attempt to abridge the discussion somewhat by explaining the *maṣādīq* (particular representations) that are theorized and their plausibility, without going into great depth about the *mafhūm* (conceptual understanding) and the *riwāyāt* (narrations).

There are generally six major hypotheses regarding **when** this verse was revealed, which we will outline below with their associated critique:

Theory #1

It refers to the same day as the one when the rules surrounding the part regarding forbidden consumption were revealed.[147]

Critique

1. The rules about meat were not new, rather they were already espoused in other parts of the Qurān, albeit in less detail.[148] Furthermore, they do not garner such a level of importance that they would cause despair for the disbelievers. Why should the disbelievers care about what the Muslims deem permissible and impermissible to eat?!
2. These verses were not the last ones to be revealed about the rules of Islam; rather there were other ones that are deemed to be among the last ones sent down, such as the rules of inheritance (specifically in terms of *al-kalālah*[149] and usury).[150] Therefore, what is the special significance of these rules such that they are being tied with the perfection of religion?

Theories #2 and #3

It refers to the Day of the Conquest of Makkah *(Yawm al-Fath al-Makkah)* in the year 8 AH, as this was the day when the idols were completely purged from the Ka'bah, and the hopes of the

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[147] This view is discussed by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Āshūr, Al-Zamakhsharī, and Al-Bayḍāwī in their respective *Tafāsīr* works.

[148] For instance, in Sūrah al-Naḥl (16), verse 115, and Sūrah al-An'ām (6), verse 145.

[149] *Al-Kalālah* refers to a person who passes away without having any ascendant or descendant heir to one's estate. Refer to the Qurān, Sūrah an-Nisā' (4), verse 176.

[150] This is per the opinion of 'Umar in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.

polytheists were completely shattered.[151] Another theory is that this refers to when Sūrah al-Tawbah was revealed in the year 9 AH, as the remaining traces of polytheism disappeared.[152]

Critique

1. Both of these theories suffer from the same problems as the previous one; namely that there were many religious rules *(aḥkām)* which were revealed after this time period, and therefore the religion had not yet been completed.
2. They go against the consensus that this verse was revealed during the Farewell Pilgrimage.

Theory #4

It refers to the start of the Prophetic proclamation *(al-Biʿthah)* because this was the day when the Islamic Message was first promulgated.

Critique

1. As we discussed previously, Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5) was one of the **last** chapters revealed to the Prophet ﷺ, and therefore it is quite far-fetched to believe that there was a verse revealed at the start of the Prophetic Message that remained suspended without a sūrah for 23 years.
2. The declaration of Prophethood was not when the disbelievers despaired of the religion of Islam. If anything, it was the start of the Prophet's journey, and they tried various stratagems to dismantle his promulgation after his announcement.
3. The perfection of Islam can hardly be deemed at the start of the Prophetic mission. Religion's perfection requires

[151] This view has been discussed by Al-Qurṭubī in his *tafsīr*.

[152] This view has been discussed by Al-Ṭabarī in his *tafsīr*.

that it should be properly elucidated first with all its rules and core tenets. This had not yet been done when the Prophet ﷺ first began preaching Islam.

Theory #5 (The Majority Sunnī Opinion)

It refers to the Day of 'Arafah, the 9th of Dhūl Ḥijjah in the year 10 AH, when the Prophet ﷺ applied the rules of *ḥajj* himself for everyone to see. This opinion is based on a *ḥadīth* from 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb narrated in *Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī* as follows:

عن عمر بن الخطاب أن رجلًا من اليهود قال له: يا أمير المؤمنين، آية في كتابكم تقرؤونها، لو علينا معشر اليهود نزلت لاتخذنا ذلك اليوم عيدًا. قال: أي آية؟ قال: {اليوم أكملت لكم دينكم وأتممت عليكم نعمتي ورضيت لكم الإسلام دينا} قال عمر: قد عرفنا ذلك اليوم، والمكان الذي نزلت فيه على النبي ص، وهو قائم بعرفة يوم جمعة

"On the authority of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb that a man from among the Jews told him: 'O Commander of the Faithful, there is a verse in your Scripture which you recite, that had it been revealed to us Jews, we would have taken that Day as an 'Eid.' He ('Umar) asked: 'Which verse?' The Jews replied: 'Today I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favour...' Then 'Umar answered: 'We know that Day and the place where it was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ: while he was standing in 'Arafah on the day of Friday.'"[153]

In other words, the glory of Islam was in full display as the Muslims were able to perform *ḥajj* without any interference from the disbelievers. Its ceremonies were carried out to the utmost of

[153] *Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 1, Pg. 18.

perfection under the guidance and supervision of the Noble Prophet ﷺ.[154]

Critique

1. Firstly, this theory entails a separation between the words "this day" that is mentioned twice in this verse, because there is no reason why the disbelievers would despair of the Muslims upon seeing them perform the *ḥajj* rituals in the first place.
2. The outward perfection of these rituals cannot constitute a completion of religion; given that the major pillars of Islam (*ṣalāt, ṣawm, ḥajj, zakāt,* and *jihād*) had already been expounded upon, thus it seems unclear what was really being added on the Day of ʿArafah per this theory. The mere refinement of some outward aspects of religious ceremonies cannot score the perfection of an entire religion.
3. There were other rules *(aḥkām)* related to Islam that were revealed after ʿArafah, such as rules of inheritance *(kalālah)* and usury *(ribā)*; therefore, how could the religion have been completed from its obligatory aspects when these rules were still not clarified yet?[155]
4. In the *naṣṣ*[156] of the *ḥadīth*, there is a clear doubt from Sufyān al-Thawrī (who is the narrator) about whether Friday was really the Day of ʿArafah. Needless to say, there

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[154] This is the major Sunnī opinion and is espoused by several commentators including Al-Ālūsī and Al-Suyūṭī.

[155] ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb admits this himself in his *khuṭbah* as reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim.*

[156] *Naṣṣ* is a text with a clear legal injunction, or a Divine decree, or a written law, or a designation (as used among Twelver Shīʿahs) which can be utilized as an argument to establish *Ḥujjiyah* (probative force) about something.

are contradictory reports *(al-mutaʿāriḍah)* to this *ḥadīth* regarding which day of the week was the Day of ʿArafah, such as these below:

عن طارق بن شهاب، قال: قال يهودي لعمر: لو علينا نزلت هذه الآية لاتخذناه عيدا: اليوم أكملت لكم دينكم قال عمر: قد علمت اليوم الذي أنزلت فيه والليلة التي نزلت ليلة الجمعة، ونحن مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بعرفات

"On the authority of Ṭāriq ibn Shihāb who said: 'A Jew told 'Umar: 'If this verse had been revealed to us we would have taken it as a day of festivity (Eid): 'Today, I have perfected for you your religion.'" 'Umar then responded: 'I know the day when this verse was revealed, and the night that it was revealed. It was the Eve of Friday (i.e., Thursday night) while we were with the Prophet ﷺ at 'Arafāt.'"[157]

5. This is even further strengthened by the reality that it is a well-recognized fact that the Prophet ﷺ lived for only 81 days after the revelation of this verse,[158] and when you presume that the Prophet ﷺ passed away on the 12th of Rabīʿ al-Awwal[159] in the year of 11 AH, this implies that

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[157] See *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, Vol. 5, Pg. 16.

[158] This is openly admitted by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in his *tafsīr*; and we find the same mentioned in *Al-Durr al-Manthūr* where it is written:

عن ابن جريج قال: مكث النبي ﷺ بعد ما نزلت هذه الآية إحدى وثمانين ليلة، قوله اليوم أكملت لكم دينكم.

"On the authority of Ibn Jurayj, he said: 'The Prophet ﷺ remained alive for eighty-one nights after this verse was revealed saying: 'Today I have perfected for you your religion.'"

[159] This is in accordance with the majority of the Ahl al-Sunnah who believe that the Prophet ﷺ passed away on the 12th of Rabīʿ al-Awwal (as quoted by Ibn Ḥajar in *Fath al-Bārī*. Ibn Ḥajar also mentions some varying views like a *ḥadīth* from Ibn Masʿūd in *Musnad Bazzār* where he says that

the verse was in fact revealed on the 18th of Dhūl Ḥijjah, not on the Day of 'Arafah!

6. The Day of 'Arafah is not considered an 'Eid, and therefore several Sunnī scholars have been confused on how to interpret 'Umar's submission *(al-iqrār)* that 'Arafah is an Eid in this *ḥadīth*.[160]

Theory #6 (The Shī'ah and Minority Sunnī Opinion)

This verse was revealed on the 18th of Dhūl Ḥijjah after the Prophet ﷺ declared the *Wilāyah* of Imām 'Alī ؑ at Ghadīr Khumm. This was the day when the disbelievers among the hypocrites and those who disbelieved among the *Ahl al-Kitāb* despaired, because they realized that Islam had been entrusted in the hands of a competent leader. This is supported by several Sunnī *aḥādīth* on this topic, and

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the death date of the Prophet ﷺ was the 11th of the month of Ramaḍān). The majority of the Sunnī scholars including biographers like Ibn Isḥāq believed it to be 12th of Rabi' al-Awwal, while for some early scholars like Mūsa ibn 'Uqbah (a historian), Laith ibn Sa'ad, Al-Khawārizmī, and Ibn Zabar believed that the Prophet ﷺ passed away on the crescent of Rabī' al-Awwal. Furthermore, historians like Abū Mikhnaf and Al-Kalbī opined it to be the 2nd of Rabi' al-Awwal. The contemporary renowned historian in Qum, Āyatullāh Yūsuf Hādi Gharawī, also mentions the 2nd of Rabi' al-Awwal as his death date. Among the Shī'ahs as well, there is a difference of opinion on his date of death. Al-Mufīd and Al-Tūsi mention it as the 28th of Safar; while Al-Kulayni, Al-Nawbhakhti, Al-Muḥaddith al-Nūri, and Al-Mas'ūdī mention it as 12th of Rabī' al-Awwal.

In any case, we resort to the majority Sunnī opinion on the precise date since this has probative significance for them and this is a contention which they raise.

[160] For instance, see the contrived justifications used by Al-Kirmānī and Ibn Ḥajar in their respective commentaries in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.

the Shīʿah *aḥādīth* are pretty much unanimous regarding this as well.[161]

Nonetheless, there is a way in which some have proposed a manner of combining theories #5 and #6.[162] The command about the *Wilāyah* of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was revealed several days before the Day of Ghadīr, however, the Prophet ﷺ was concerned about how the Muslim nation would receive it and therefore did not immediately reveal it explicitly.[163] Thus, it is possible that this verse was revealed on the Day of ʿArafah with a large portion of Sūrah al-Mā'idah, and as a result, some companions heard it and recorded its revelation then. The Prophet ﷺ attempted to disclose Imām ʿAlī's *Wilāyah* at this juncture, however, due to fear regarding how it would be received, he adopted a gradual approach in doing so. Therefore, he only alluded to the *Wilāyah* in brief with the *Ḥadīth of Thaqalayn* and the *Ḥadīth* of the Twelve Caliphs. He was reluctant to be explicit in his appointment of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ until the Day of Ghadīr, when he received a guarantee of Divine Protection in verse 67 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah regarding its disclosure. Therefore, he hastened at that very spot to make sure that the

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[161] There are approximately six narrations *(riwāyāt)* from Sunnī sources that can be found in the works of Al-Ḥaskānī, Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, and Abū Naʿīm al-Iṣfahānī on the authority of Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī, Abū Hurayrah, and Ibn ʿAbbās. The Shīʿah narrations *(riwāyāt)* are plentiful on the authority of Al-Ṣadiqayn (Imām al-Baqir ﷺ and Imām al-Ṣādiq ﷺ).

[162] This is per the research of Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭehrānī in his book, *Maʿrifat al-Imām,* Vol. 8, Lessons 106-109. It appears that Sayyid Jaʿfar Murtaḍā al-ʿĀmilī also endorses this view in his book, *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ fī Sīrat al-Nabī al-Aʿẓam,* Vol. 31, Pp. 310-311. ʿAllāmah Ṭabā'ṭabā'ī also advocates for this view in his *Tafsīr al-Mizān.*

[163] Nonetheless, there were implicit mentions about the authority of the *Ahl al-Bayt* such as *Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn* in which the Prophet ﷺ exhorted people to adhere to the Qurān and his *Ahl al-Bayt* (see *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* for instance).

announcement was made, officially reciting the Verse of *Al-Ikmāl* separately for the companions a second time. In this manner, we may be able to reconcile between these two theories rather nicely.[164]

Appendix C

Resolving the Context of the Verse of *Al-Ikmāl al-Dīn*

This verse is extremely peculiar in that there is a portion which speaks about the completion of religion, but it is sandwiched between a discussion about the rules of food that are prohibited to consume! This portion of the verse is such that even if it were to be elided or deleted altogether, the remainder of the verse would continue to flow without any loss in meaning. In fact, Shīʿah and Sunnī scholars are virtually unanimous that the Verse of *al-Ikmāl al-Dīn* is a separate verse that is an interjectory sentence *(al-jumlah al-muʾtariḍah)* between the rulings *(aḥkām)* of meat.[165] Thus, we find Ibn ʿĀshūr stating the situation beautifully when he says:

هذه جملة وقعت معترضة بين آية المحرمات المتقدمة وبين آية الرخصة الآتية وهي قوله فمن اضطر في مخمصة لأن الآية بفاء الفريع يقضي باتصالها بما تقدمها ولا يصلح للاتصال بها إلا قوله حرمت عليكم الميتة

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[164] The readers should know that there are some narrations in the Shīʿah books which also state that this verse was revealed on the Day of ʿArafah, although those are weak narrations; nonetheless, this reconciliation makes it possible to accept all the narrations on this topic without any issues.

[165] In fact, this is the biggest evidence to substantiate what we have been mentioning all along in our discussions of various *āyāt*: namely, the context is not necessarily a proof *(ḥujjah)* when there is no internal or external contextual indicator *(qarīnah)* to suggest a contextual connection.

> "This (i.e., the Verse of *al-Ikmāl*) is a sentence that is interjectory between the preceding list of forbidden items and the verse of lenience (i.e., but whoever is forced by hunger...). This is because the particle '*fā* of elaboration' is used to connect to a preceding clause, and it does not make sense for it to be connected to anything except the start of the verse: 'Forbidden to you...'"[166]

Therefore, we realize that the apparent context is not probative in this verse and should not be used to tie the Verse of *Al-Ikmāl* to the rules of food consumption. As discussed in Appendix B, this verse is intricately tied to the Verse of *Tablīgh* (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 67). In other words, the Verse of *Tablīgh* was revealed **before** the proclamation at Ghadīr, and the Verse of *Al-Ikmāl* was revealed immediately **thereafter**. Some often raise the question as to how this can be rationalized, since the verses which are purportedly revealed for the same purpose are separated by over sixty verses. In response to this objection, we state that the Qurān is not necessarily revealed in accordance with chronology. For instance, there are even some chapters of the Qurān that might contain a mixture of Makkan and Medinite verses within them. Therefore, the verses were compiled in accordance with the commands of the Prophet ﷺ during his lifetime, and the order of revelation has no bearing necessarily on how the Qurān was organized or put together.[167]

However, as we have espoused in the past, we do not believe that the words of Allah ﷻ are ever placed without wisdom; there is **always** a rationale or salience *(al-munāsabah)* for why a verse

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[166] See Ibn 'Āshūr's *Al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr* regarding this verse.

[167] There are some Shī'ah scholars who believe that the order of the verses was based on the opinion of the companions *(al-ijtihādī)*, however, we strongly oppose this contention and believe the order was prescribed by Allah ﷻ Himself *(al-tawqīfī)*.

is placed in a certain context. We will present a few explanations which are presented by some scholars in this vein:

1. The keen observer will notice that nearly all the verses that pertain to the purified Prophetic progeny are embedded in a manner to render them discreet and inconspicuous. Some have proposed that this was a mechanism to preserve the Qurān from any kind of tampering, as there were individuals who were quite recalcitrant to accept the authority of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ after the demise of the Prophet ﷺ. Hence, if the verses had not been interpolated in this fashion, there would have been serious attempts to either reformat it or change its contents.[168]

   Others state that this is rather a means by which to metaphorically highlight this part of the verse as being related to a separate issue because any conscientious reader would immediately note that a certain part of the verse does not fit with the context of the rules regarding forbidden foods. The interjectory nature of this sentence conveys a sense of exigency that even amidst these mundane and complicated rules of food consumption, this matter is essential to clarify. Furthermore, given that these rules have already been clarified previously in the Qurān, there is an immediate stark contrast rendered that the perfection of religion is not related to the rules of food surrounding it.[169]
2. Another argument advocated is that this verse is in fact tied to the first verse of Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5) which reads as follows:

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[168] This view has been discussed by several Shīʿah scholars, including Āyatullāh Jaʿfar Subḥānī in his *Mafāhīm al-Qurān*, as well as Āyatullāh Nāṣir Makārim Shirāzi in his *Tafsīr al-Amthal* under the Verse of *Wilāyah*.
[169] This has been discussed by Sayyid Jaʿfar Murtaḍā al-ʿĀmilī in his *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ fī Sīrat al-Nabī al-Aʿẓam*, Vol. 31, Pg. 302.

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ أَوْفُوا۟ بِٱلْعُقُودِ

"O you who believe, fulfill your covenants..."

In Arabic, this is referred to as: *radd al-'ajz 'alā al-ṣadr.*[170] Therefore, the Verse of *Al-Ikmāl* has come in between this context to combine the covenants that are bodily and the covenants that are spiritual; to fuse between those responsibilities which are related to actions and those which are related to beliefs; to consolidate between the corporeal pact of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*, and the otherworldly one of *Wilāyah.*[171] Indeed, this follows the entire theme of Sūrah al-Mā'idah, which focuses on the external aspects of religion (such as *ḥajj*, eating and drinking, ablution, alcohol/gambling); and the internal aspects of religious authority (*Wilāyah* of Allah ﷻ, His Prophet ﷺ, and those whom He has designated, censuring the Jews and Christians for rejecting their Divine representatives).

3. This verse covers the rules of impermissible food items, which have been repeated in three other places in the Qurān: namely, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), verse 173 (Medinite), Sūrah al-An'ām (6), verse 145 (Makkan), and Sūrah al-Naḥl (16), verse 114 (Makkan). In all these preceding verses, the verses immediately after discussing the People of the Book and how they transgressed against the laws of Allah ﷻ, it

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[170] This is most accurately rendered into English as epanalepsis, a rhetorical term, implying a ring structure in the overlay of sūrah motifs, such that the Verse of *Al-Ikmāl* is gilded back on to the initial verse 1 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah commanding the believers to observe their covenants. They are like mirror images. So, the way to read it is by realizing that the believers fulfilling the contractual obligations are tied with guaranteeing safety from the disbelievers and the perfection of their religions - *Ikmāl al-Dīn.*

[171] This view is espoused by Āyatullāh Ṣādeqī Ṭehrānī in his *tafsīr, Al-Furqān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān.*

mentions how they were recompensed by Allah ﷻ through extremely harsh restrictions in their dietary codes. It is as if these verses seek to lay the foundation for negating the *wilāyah* of the *Ahl al-Kitāb* gradually and point out how their example should not be followed. Then, in the fourth and final exposition of Sūrah al-Mā'idah, verse 3, the substitution for the authority of Christians and Jews is proposed, contextualizing the Verse of *Al-Ikmāl* beautifully.

After this establishment, verse 4 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah continues: "They ask you what is made lawful for them..." as the *wilāyah* of the Jews and Christians has been replaced and the religion of Allah ﷻ has been completed.[172]

4. The final possibility which we will present here is one that we have not seen any scholar elucidate; rather, it has been discovered by these writers after careful reflection regarding the Verse of *Tablīgh* together with the Verse of *Al-Ikmāl* in their respective contexts. This observation is built upon a recognition of the fact that the Qurānic verses need to be examined in a meta-linear fashion,[173] given that they are not necessarily temporally organized. We believe that this theory will delight the readers and provide some interesting insights, however, we do not claim that it is a definitive explanation, for Allah ﷻ knows best!

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[172] This possible interpretation is derived from a Persian paper *Naqsh-e-Siyāq dar Tafsīr-e-Āye-ye-Ikmāl (The Role of Context in Commentary of the Verse of Perfection (in Religion))*, by Abbās Ismā'ilīzadeh and Maḥboobeh Ghulāmī.

[173] Linear analysis denotes that a person is examining every verse in the context of the verse that textually directly precedes it. Meta-linear implies that one can find contextual patterns in between verses that are split by many intervening verses.

Firstly, we will present Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verses 66-67, followed directly by verses 3-5 in order:

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا التَّوْرَاةَ وَالْإِنجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِم مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ لَأَكَلُوا مِن فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِن تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ مِّنْهُمْ أُمَّةٌ مُّقْتَصِدَةٌ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

"*And if only they had observed the Tawrāh (Torah) and the Injīl (Gospel)* **and what was revealed to them from their Lord**, *they would have surely eaten from above themselves and from beneath their feet. Among them are people who are moderate, but many of them are of evil conduct.*" (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 66)

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ ۖ وَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

"O Messenger, deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His Message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people." Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 67)

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ وَأَن تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَامِ ذَٰلِكُمْ فِسْقٌ ۗ الْيَوْمَ يَئِسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ ۚ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا ۚ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرَ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِّإِثْمٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

"*Forbidden to you are the dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah;*

that which is strangled, beaten to death, killed by a fall, gored to death, and savaged by beasts of prey, except what you kill by your own hands; what is sacrificed on the stone altars, and that you perform divination by arrows (seek decision through divining arrows) - that is grave disobedience. **This day those who disbelieve have despaired of your religion, so do not fear them, but fear Me. This day, I have perfected for you your religion and I have completed upon you My Favour and I have approved for you Islam (as) a religion.** *But whoever is forced by hunger and not inclining to sin, then indeed, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, All-Merciful."* (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 3)

يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ مَاذَآ أُحِلَّ لَهُمْ ۖ قُلْ أُحِلَّ لَكُمُ ٱلطَّيِّبَٰتُ وَمَا عَلَّمْتُم مِّنَ ٱلْجَوَارِحِ
مُكَلِّبِينَ تُعَلِّمُونَهُنَّ مِمَّا عَلَّمَكُمُ ٱللَّهُ ۖ فَكُلُوا۟ مِمَّآ أَمْسَكْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَٱذْكُرُوا۟ ٱسْمَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ ۖ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَرِيعُ ٱلْحِسَابِ ﴿٤﴾

"They ask you what (is) made lawful for them. Say: 'Lawful for you are the good things and what you have taught of (your) hunting animals, the ones who train animals to hunt, you teach them from what Allah has taught you. So, eat of what they catch for you, but mention (the) Name (of) Allah on it, and fear Allah.' Indeed, Allah is swift (in taking) account." (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 4)

ٱلْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمُ ٱلطَّيِّبَٰتُ ۖ وَطَعَامُ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ حِلٌّ لَّكُمْ ۖ
وَطَعَامُكُمْ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ ۖ وَٱلْمُحْصَنَٰتُ مِنَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ وَٱلْمُحْصَنَٰتُ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ
أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَآ ءَاتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ
مُسَٰفِحِينَ وَلَا مُتَّخِذِىٓ أَخْدَانٍ ۗ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِٱلْإِيمَٰنِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُۥ
وَهُوَ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ مِنَ ٱلْخَٰسِرِينَ ﴿٥﴾

"*This day are made lawful for you the good things; and (the) food (of) those who were given the Scripture (is) lawful for you, and your food (is) lawful for them. And the chaste women from the believers and the chaste women from those who were given the Scripture from before you, when you have given them their bridal due, being chaste, not being lewd, and not ones (who are) taking secret lovers.* **And whoever denies the faith - then surely they (have) wasted their deeds, and in the Hereafter, they (will be) among the losers.**" (Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 5)

Analysis:

The keen reader will observe that we have separated the verses into three parts: parts that are underlined (regarding food consumption), parts that are *italicized* (regarding the *Ahl al-Kitāb*), and parts that are **bolded** (regarding *Wilāyah*). We humbly believe that these verses show a thematic consistency with interwoven sentences that are linked to one another; this provides some unprecedented insights into what might be guiding the context of the Verse of *Al-Ikmāl al-Dīn* and its surrounding verses.

Firstly, we will examine the portions that are **bolded**. At the outset, there is a reminder about what had previously been revealed to the *Ahl al-Kitab* outside of their sacred Scriptures (i.e., the doctrine of *Wilāyah*).[174] Then there is a commandment to the

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[174] As we discussed previously, we have narrations that state that "what was revealed to the *Ahl al-Kitab* from their Lord" was the doctrine of *Wilāyah* (namely Prophetic successorship); compare the contextual discussion on the *mafhūm* (conceptual understanding) of verse 66 to refresh this point. Also consider this narration from *Ma'ānī al-Akhbār* of Shaykh al-Ṣadūq regarding verse 40 of Sūrah al-Baqarah (2):

عن ابن عباس قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ لما أنزل الله تبارك وتعالى ﴿وأوفوا بعهدي أوف بعهدكم﴾ والله لقد خرج آدم من الدنيا وقد عاهد على الوفاء لولده شيث فما وفى له...ولقد خرج موسى من الدنيا وعاهد قومه على الوفاء لوصيه يوشع بن نون فما وفت أمته، ولقد

Prophet ﷺ to deliver that which has been revealed to him regarding the *Wilāyah* of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. Then Allah ﷻ states that after this Prophetic declaration, those who disbelieve have despaired from the religion and the believers do not need to fear them any longer. It is emphasized that the religion (of Islam) has been completed by this covenant. Finally, there is a mention that whoever rejects the faith will be in a loss in the Hereafter and their efforts will be in vain.[175]

رفع عيسى بن مريم إلى السماء وقد عاهد قومه على الوفاء لوصيه شمعون بن حمون الصفا فما وفت أمته، وإني مفارقكم عن قريب وخارج من بين أظهركم وقد عهدت إلى امتي في عهد علي بن أبي طالب وإنها لراكبة سنن من قبلها من الأمم في مخالفة وصيي وعصيانه

"On the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās who said: 'The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that when Allah, Blessed and Most High, revealed: 'And fulfill My covenant, I will fulfill your covenant,' by Allah, certainly Ādam left this world and seized the covenant from the people to be loyal to his son, Shīth (Seth), but this was not fulfilled to him...And certainly Mūsā (Moses) departed from this world and adjured his people to be faithful to his successor, Yūsha' (Joshua) ibn Nūn, but his nation did not fulfill it; and ʿĪsā ibn Maryam (Jesus the son of Mary) was raised to the heaven, and he had taken the covenant from his people to be loyal to his successor, Sham'ūn (Simon) ibn Hamūn al-Safa, but his nation did not fulfill it; and I will soon leave you and depart from among you, and I have made a covenant to my nation about the successorship of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, however it will indeed traverse the same path of the nations that preceded it in transgressing against and disobeying my successor.'"

[175] Consider this tradition from *Tafsīr Furāt al-Kūfī*:

عن أبي جعفر الباقر ﷺ في قوله]: (ومن يكفر بالايمان فقد حبط عمله [وهو في الآخرة من الخاسرين أ، ب]) [قال:] [فالايمان في بطن القرآن علي (بن أبي طالب. ر)

"On the authority of Abī Ja'far al-Bāqir ﷺ regarding his saying: 'And whoever disbelieves in faith, their deeds will be invalidated, and in the Hereafter, they will be among the losers.' He said: 'Faith in the intrinsic of the Qurān is ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ, so whoever

Secondly, we address the portions that are underlined; verse 66 mentions the *Ahl al-Kitāb* and how if they had upheld their Scriptures and what was revealed to them (i.e., *Wilāyah*), then they would have been granted Divine sustenance in plentitude, from both above and below themselves. Thereafter, in the next verse, there is the command by Allah ﷻ to the Noble Prophet ﷺ about the proclamation that he must make at Ghadīr. After this, in verse 3, we see that there is a highly detailed commentary about what foods are prohibited for the believers - it is as though Allah ﷻ is saying that now that you have accepted the *Wilāyah* of Imām ʿAlī ؑ, you can expect your sustenance to multiply immensely just like it would have been for the *Ahl al-Kitāb* if only they had fulfilled their covenant of *Wilāyah*.[176]

In fact, when we examine the Shīʿah narrations, we find that there is significant mention about the link between the *Wilāyah* of Imām ʿAlī ؑ and an abundance of sustenance. Consider the following narrations.

Imām ʿAlī ؑ is reported to have said in *Kitāb Sulaym:*

ولو أن الأمة منذ قبض الله نبيه اتبعوني وأطاعوني لأكلوا من فوقهم ومن تحت أرجلهم رغدا إلى يوم القيامة

"From the inception of when His Prophet was taken back, if the nation would have followed me and obeyed me, **they would have eaten from above them and below their feet** in abundance until the Day of Judgement."[177]

في حديث طولة عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) قال: خطب سلمان فقال...والذي نفس سلمان بيده لتركبن طبقا عن طبق، سنة بني إسرائيل القذة بالقذة أما والله لو وليتموها عليا لأكلتم من فوقكم، ومن تحت أرجلكم

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disbelieves in his *Wilāyah*, their deeds will become invalidated, and in the Hereafter, they will be among the losers.'"

[177] *Kitāb Sulaym*, Vol. 2, Pg. 636, Ḥadīth 11; *Al-Iḥtijāj*, Vol. 1, Pg. 145; *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 31, Pg. 407 [*Jāmiʿ al-Aḥādīth* software].

In a long narration from Imām al-Ṣādiq ﷺ he said: "Salmān (al-Fārisī) gave a sermon, in which he said: '...By the one in whose hand is the life of Salmān, you will tread from station to station, the way an arrowhead resembles another, the path of Banū Isrā'īl. By Allah, if you had appointed 'Alī to the position (given him his rightful position by Allah of leading and guiding you), then you would have **eaten from above you and from under your feet.**'"[178]

قال امير المؤمنين (عليه السلام): يا أيتها الأمة المتحيرة بعد نبيها لو كنتم قدمتم من قدم الله وأخرتم من أخر الله وجعلتم الولاية والوراثة حيث جعلها الله ما عال ولي الله ولا عال سهم من فرائض الله ولا اختلف اثنان في حكم الله ولا تنازعت الأمة في شئ من أمر الله إلا عندنا علمه من كتاب الله فذوقوا وبال أمركم

In *Al-Kāfī,* it is narrated from Imām 'Alī ﷺ that he said: "O group of people - bewildered in their religious affairs after their Prophet! If you had given precedence to the one who Allah gave precedence to, and deferred the one who Allah had deferred; and if you had kept the heritage and the authority where Allah had kept them, then **no part of Divine determinate share would have been unfairly distributed,** and no friend of Allah would have been humiliated, and no two people would have differed on the law of Allah. But (now), taste the evil consequences of your negligence about what you sent forth!"[179]

عن أبي عمرو الجوني: قال سلمان الفارسي حين بويع أبو بكر " كرداذ وناكرداذ "؛ أي عملتم وما عملتم، لو بايعوا عليا **لأكلوا من فوقهم ومن تحت أرجلهم**

"On the authority of Abī Amrū al-Jūwayni, he said: 'When Abū Bakr was pledged allegiance, Salmān al-Fārisī stated: 'They did (one thing) and did not do (another). If they had

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[178] *Rijāl al-Kashshi*, Pp. 79-80; *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 22, Pg. 387.
[179] *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 7, Pg. 78.

given allegiance to 'Alī, **then they would have eaten from above and from beneath their feet.**'"[180]

In other words, one can draw the conclusion that there appears to be a link between the nation accepting the *Wilāyah* of Imām 'Alī ﷺ and them being granted sustenance in superabundance. In light of this fact, one may surmise that the verses are linked in precisely this way: since the Muslim nation had initially accepted the *Wilāyah* of Imām 'Alī ﷺ on the Day of Ghadīr, it followed that their sustenance would increase, therefore a detailed exposition of all the rules the believers needed to know as it pertained to food items became necessary.[181]

Finally, we examine the *italicized* portions: Allah ﷻ starts by talking about the *Ahl al-Kitāb*. Then there is a mention about how there is a group of them who are righteous; and after the declaration of *Wilāyah*, there was no longer any need to fear the disbelievers among them. Now, there is some leniency granted in the Muslim relations with the *Ahl al-Kitāb*. After the perfection of the religion of Islam with the declaration of the *Wilāyah* of Imām 'Alī ﷺ, Allah ﷻ gave an allowance in establishing good relations with them, so long as they are not depraved or immoral.[182]

We believe that this theory deserves further investigation, as it provides a satisfactory explanation since these verses diverge between several seemingly unrelated topics. However, when one combines the various verses together in the order in which they

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[180] *Ansāf al-Ashrāf*, Vol. 2, Pg. 14.

[181] Of course, most of the Prophet's nation did **not** fulfill or uphold this covenant, and the *Wilāyah* of Imām 'Alī ﷺ that was originally accepted at Ghadīr was neglected and usurped after the Prophet ﷺ left this world.

[182] One can propose that the secret in this is that after the establishment of *Wilāyah*, the religion of Islam became crystallized as a permanent and everlasting Message until the Day of Judgement. Therefore, normalizing relations with the *Ahl al-Kitāb* is acceptable because there is no longer any threat that they can impose after the demise of the Prophet ﷺ.

were revealed (as confirmed by the traditions on this topic), new insights come to light as to why the verses are organized in this way. Indeed, this is perhaps one of the biggest signs that the Noble Qurān is **not at all** a haphazard Book (as some Orientalists claim), and that there is a special Divine Wisdom underlying its design. Perhaps this approach will reap dividends if it is employed to examine other verses as well. And Allah ﷻ knows best!

Conclusion

The aim of this book was to study the Verse of Conveyance *(Āyah al-Tablīgh)* - which is found in the Noble Qurān, Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 67 - comprehensively without any preconceived notions, employing a primarily Qurānic framework, by utilizing the dialectical *mafhūm* (conceptual understanding) and *maṣādīq* (particular representations) approach in order to corroborate a conclusion as what could be the most plausible interpretation and historical representation of this verse.

It was demonstrated how this verse is incontrovertibly tied with ***Wilāyah* - authority and succession after the Prophet** ﷺ - and demonstrated that the event of Ghadīr underlined both the occasion and basis for revealing the Verse of *Tablīgh*. This book also cites ample narrations - discussing the reasons and circumstances of this verse, along with their respective critiques, to substantiate via a process of elimination that Ghadīr is the most viable event to explain the purpose of the revelation of this verse.

Various contentions were also discussed and relevant answers were given, along with discussions about connected matters that were presented in the appendices - leaving no room for objections about the import of this verse.

Furthermore, the book introduced a new approach to this verse, whereby parallels between the Verse of *Tablīgh* - Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 67, and the Verse of *Al-Ikmāl al-Dīn* - Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), verse 3 were also presented.

In conclusion, we implore to Allah ﷻ that this book may provide useful insights to the readers and offer them with a deeper understanding of this verse in question.

Other Publications[183]

An Exegetical Study of the Verse of Purity

The Verse of Purification *(Āyah al-Taṭhīr)*, which is found in Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33), verse 33 of the Noble Qurān, is likely one of the most controversial theological verses in the history of Islam. Namely, the dispute has centered around two key questions: Who are the "People of the House" *(Ahl al-Bayt* ﷺ) that are mentioned in this verse, and what is Allah ﷻ specifically saying about them? In this research, it was sought to present the various views espoused by commentators regarding these questions while weighing the lexical, semantic, contextual, and traditionist *(ḥadīth)* corroborators. It is demonstrated in this book that all the evidence points towards these individuals being none other than Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, his daughter Lady Fāṭima ؑ, Imām ʿAlī ؑ, Imām Ḥasan ؑ, and Imām Ḥusayn ؑ, and as an extension, the Noble Imāms ؑ from his lineage; as well, this verse serves to substantiate their immaculateness and immunity from committing any sins. After presenting the answer to these questions, it was endeavoured to present and refute the myriad contentions often raised by critics against this thesis. This book is the first of its kind in the English language, and cites many Arabic, Persian, and Urdu resources. We pray it may be beneficial to those who seek a deeper Qurānic-based understanding about the identity of the *Ahl al-Bayt* ﷺ and their status in Islam.

Spiritual Prescriptions

The topic of Islamic Spirituality has often faced the challenge of remaining comprehensible to a limited few who have been able to decipher the realm of the esoteric and theoretical. *Spiritual*

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[183] Further information on these publications and the ordering details for them, one can refer to www.tasneeminstitute.org/publications/

Prescriptions seeks to make accessible spirituality by distilling difficult concepts into digestible nuggets of wisdom. Contained within the pages are 100 Spiritual Prescriptions which offer simple cognitive/and or behavioural instructions to help nurture and illuminate the soul. In keeping with the final testament of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ in adhering to the Qurān and his immaculate family, the *Ahl al Bayt* ﷺ, each spiritual prescription is rooted in the Qurān, and the Prophetic legacy as transmitted to us through those who knew him best.

The Grand Tour: Qurānic Descriptions of Paradise

The most prominent Attribute of Allah ﷻ in the Noble Qurān is His infinite Mercy. From among His ninety-nine Names, He selected 'The All-Compassionate - *al-Raḥmān*' and 'The All-Merciful - *al-Raḥīm*' to introduce Himself to His creations. These Attributes are not manifested to their fullest extent in this temporal world due to the limitations that characterize this Earthly life; however, the Qurānic descriptions paint a vivid picture of the Paradisal abode that awaits the righteous ones. It is these descriptions which have been collected and analyzed throughout this book. *The Grand Tour: Qurānic Descriptions of Paradise* offers the readers a glimpse into a wondrous world that represents the epitome of Divine Mercy. Whether it is the splendid palaces, the opulent garments, or the company of the immaculate Prophets ﷺ and the *Ahl al-Bayt* ﷺ, this book walks the readers through each material and spiritual blessing reserved for the believers in the Hereafter, as promised by Almighty Allah Himself.

Musnad al-Imām Mūsā ibn Ja'far ﷺ

The *Musnad of al-Imām Mūsā ibn Ja'far* ﷺ is a compilation of traditions from his companion and student, Abū 'Umrān ibn Mūsā ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mirwazī who lived during the 3rd/9th century in

Baghdad. He was the teacher of the son of Sindī Sahik while Imām al-Kāzim ﷺ was under house arrest with Sindī. He took this opportunity to learn from the Imām ﷺ and record many *aḥādīth* from him. This work has been remarkably preserved in early manuscripts and is presented for the first time in the English language, along with an extensive introduction to the compiler and the collection itself.